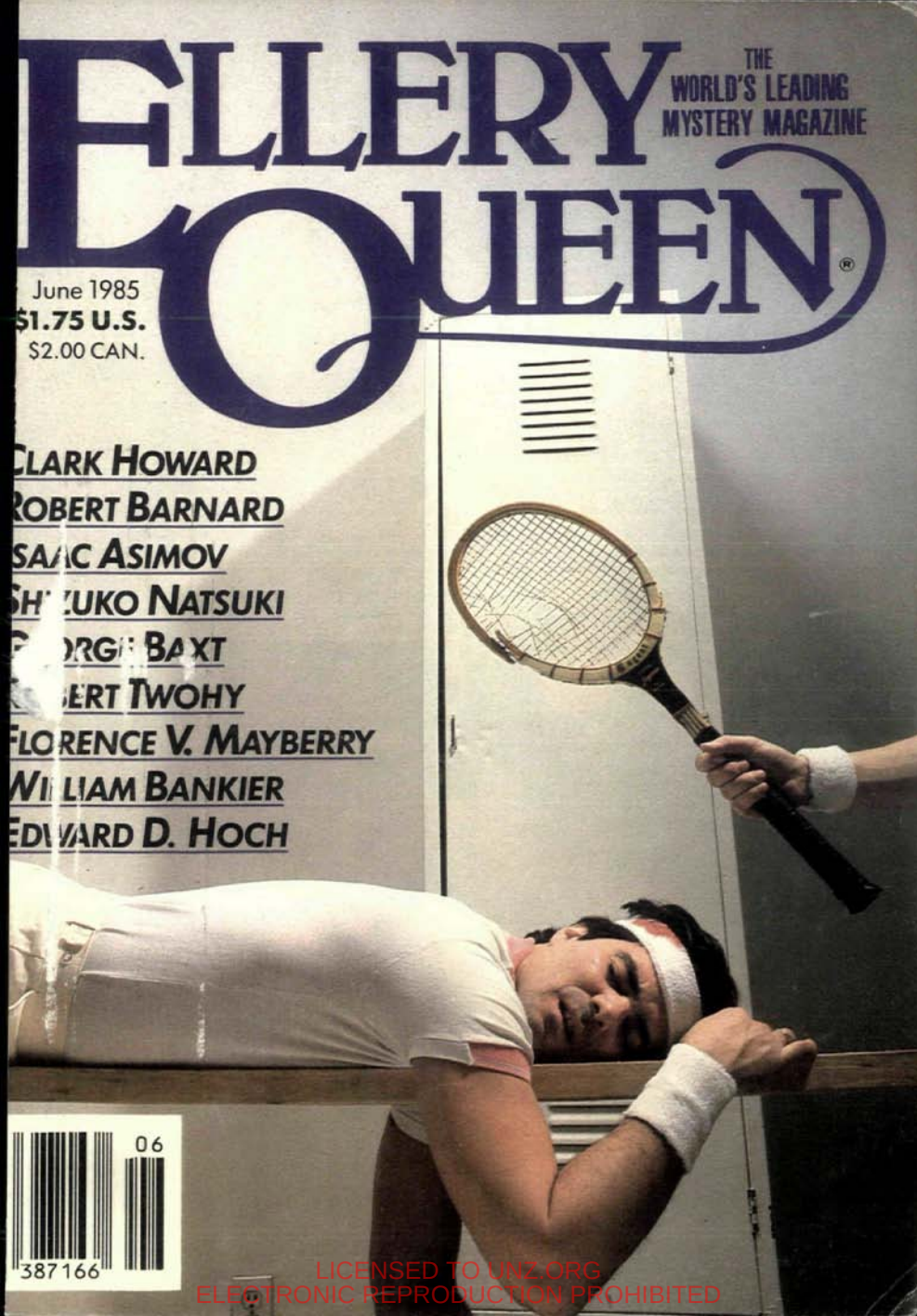
ELLERY QUEEN®

THE WORLD'S LEADING MYSTERY MAGAZINE

June 1985
$1.75 U.S.
$2.00 CAN.

CLARK HOWARD
ROBERT BARNARD
ISAAC ASIMOV
SHIZUKO NATSUKI
GEORGE BAXT
ROBERT TWOHY
FLORENCE V. MAYBERRY
WILLIAM BANKIER
EDWARD D. HOCH

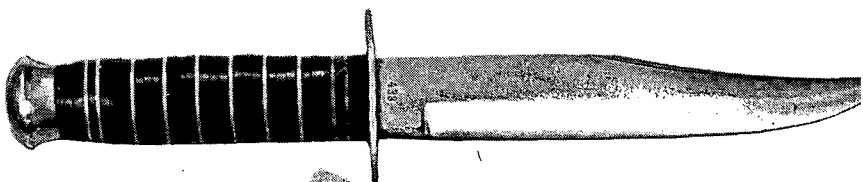


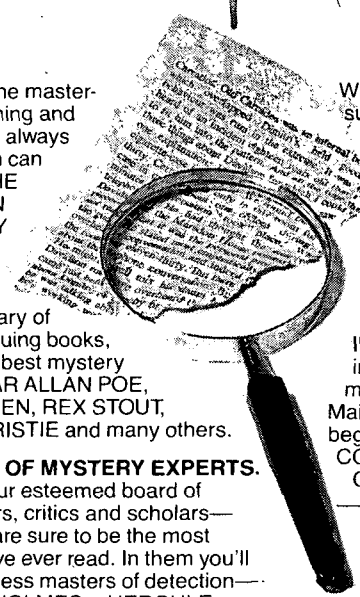
06
387166

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Discover the suspense and satisfaction of the world's greatest mysteries in

THE COLLECTION OF MYSTERY CLASSICS





At last! The masterpieces of cunning and deduction you always wanted to own can be yours in THE COLLECTION OF MYSTERY CLASSICS. It's an exciting hardcover library of the most intriguing books, by the world's best mystery writers: EDGAR ALLAN POE, ELLERY QUEEN, REX STOUT, AGATHA CHRISTIE and many others.

THE CHOICE OF MYSTERY EXPERTS. Selected by our esteemed board of mystery writers, critics and scholars—these novels are sure to be the most involving you've ever read. In them you'll meet the timeless masters of detection—SHERLOCK HOLMES... HERCULE POIROT...NERO WOLFE... and many others. And you'll confront plots and counterplots that challenge, confound and satisfy.

Plus, to enhance your reading enjoyment, each novel features a special introduction that acquaints you with such background highlights as biographical facts about the author and details about the sleuth.

What's more, these books are superb examples of fine craftsmanship, featuring plush, padded leatherette covers; lustrous gold stamping; archival-quality, acid-free paper that will last for centuries; and much more. So you'll take special delight in owning, displaying and reading them.

NO-RISK, PRIVATE INVESTIGATION. You are now invited to preview a novel each month, without obligation to buy. Mail the postpaid card at right to begin investigating THE COLLECTION OF MYSTERY CLASSICS.

MONSTROUS MURDERS...

Two men are dead, their faces contorted with terror. According to legend and evidence, the killer is a hideous demon dog that stalks the countryside...and threatens to kill again! Discover how the world's greatest detective, Sherlock Holmes, solves this hair-raising mystery in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. It's your first preview volume...

FREE FOR 15 DAYS

Bantam Books P.O. Box 970 Hicksville, N.Y. 11802

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE WORLD'S LEADING MYSTERY MAGAZINE

ELLERY QUEEN®

2 **Animals** / Clark Howard
22 **The Stairs** / Shizuko Natsuki
32 **Upside Down** / Isaac Asimov
38 **The Brass Man** / James Powell
53 **The Crime of the Century** / Edward D. Hoch
62 **What Happened** / R. E. Lane
66 **The Settlement** / Randye Lordon
71 **Tell Me My Mind, Sally Ann** / Joan McAteer
74 **Handig** / George Baxt
84 **A Most Ignoble Crime (I Swear)** / Mae Z. Scanlan
90 **Widow?** / Florence V. Mayberry
106 **Villainy in the Village** / Robert P. Mills
112 **What's in a Name?** / Robert Barnard
121 **Narc in Love** / Robert Twohy
134 **Murder in the Cards** / William Bankier

86 **The Jury Box** / Allen J. Hubin
156 **Index to Volume 85**

Note: indicia on page 159

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* short story by

CLARK HOWARD

"I'm incorrigible," Monty told Ned. "And someday I'm supposed to develop into a sociopath. You know what that is?"

"Not exactly," Ned admitted.

Monty shrugged. "Me neither. I guess I'll find out when I become one . . ."

ANIMALS

by CLARK HOWARD

As Ned Price got off the city bus at the corner of his block, he saw that Monty and his gang of troublemakers were, as usual, loitering in front of Shavelson's Drugstore. A large portable radio—they called it their "ghetto blaster"—was sitting atop a newspaper vending machine, playing very loud acid rock. The gang, six of them, all in their late teens, appeared to be arguing over the contents of a magazine that was circulating among them.

Ned started down the sidewalk. An arthritic limp made him favor his right leg. That, coupled with lumbago and sixty-two years of less than easy living, gave him an overall stooped, tired look. A thrift-shop sportcoat slightly too large didn't help matters. Ned could have crossed the street and gone around Monty and his friends, but he lived on this side of the street so he would just have to cross back again farther down the block. It was difficult enough to get around these days without taking extra steps. Besides, he figured he had at least as much right to walk down the sidewalk as they did to obstruct it.

When Ned got closer, he saw the magazine the gang was passing around was *Ring* and that their argument had to do with the relative merits of two boxers named Hector "Macho" Camacho and Ray

© 1985 by Clark Howard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Boom Boom" Mancini. Maybe they'd be too caught up in their argument to hassle him today. That would be a welcome change. A day without having to match wits with this year's version of the Sharks.

But no such luck.

"Hey, old man, where you been?" Monty asked as Ned approached. "Down to pick up your check?" He stepped in the middle of the sidewalk and blocked the way.

Ned stopped. "Yes," he said, "I've been down to pick up my check."

"You're one of those old people who don't let the mailman bring their check, huh?" Monty asked with a smile. "You know there's too many crooks in this neighborhood. You're smart, huh?"

"No, just careful," Ned said. If I was smart, he thought, I would have crossed the street.

"Hey, lemme ask you something," Monty said with mock seriousness. "I seen on a TV special where some old people don't get enough pension to live on an' they eat dogfood and catfood. Do you do that, old man?"

"No, I don't," Ned replied. There was a slight edge to his answer this time. He knew several people who *did* resort to the mean Monty had just described.

"Listen, old man, I think you're lying," Monty said without rancor. "I myself seen you in Jamail's Grocery buying catfood."

"That's because I have a cat." Ned tried to step around Monty but the youth moved and blocked his way again.

"You got a cat, old man? Ain't that nice?" Monty feigned interest. "Wha' kind of cat you got, old man?"

"Just an ordinary cat," Ned said. "Nothing special."

"Not a Persian or a Siamese or one of them expensive cats?"

"No. Just an ordinary cat. A tabby, I think it's called."

"A tabby! Hey, tha's really nice."

"Can I go now?" Ned asked.

"Sure!" Monty said, shrugging elaborately. "Who's stopping you, old man?"

Ned stepped around him and this time the youth did not interfere with him. As he walked away, Ned heard Monty say something in Spanish and the others laughed.

A regular Freddie Prinze, Ned thought.

As Ned entered his third-floor-rear kitchenette, he said, "Molly, I'm back." Double-locking the door securely behind him, he hung

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his coat on a wooden wall peg and limped into a tiny cluttered living room. "Molly!" he called again. Then he stood still and a cold feeling came over him that he was alone in the apartment. "Molly?"

He stuck his head in the narrow Pullman kitchen, then pushed back a curtain that concealed a tiny sleeping alcove.

"Molly, where are you?"

Even as he asked the question one last time, Ned knew he would not find her. He hurried into the bathroom. The window was open about three inches. Ned raised it all the way and stuck his head out. Three stories below, in the alley, some kids were playing Kick-the-Can. A ledge ran from the window to a back-stairs landing.

"Molly!" Ned called several times.

Moments later, he was out in front looking up and down the street. Monty and his friends, seeing him, sauntered down to where he stood.

"What's the matter, old man?" Monty asked. "You lose something?"

"My cat," Ned said. He turned suspicious eyes on Monty and his friends. "You wouldn't have seen her, by any chance, would you?"

"Is there a reward?" Monty inquired.

Ned gave the question quick consideration. There was an old watch of his late wife's he could probably sell. "There might be, if the cat isn't harmed. Do you know where she is?"

Monty turned to the others. "Anybody see this old man's cat?" he asked with a total absence of concern. When they all shrugged and declared ignorance, he said to Ned, "Sorry, old man. If you'd let the mailman deliver your check, you'd have been home to look after your cat. See the price you pay for being greedy?" He strutted off down the street, his followers in his wake. Feeling ill, Ned watched them all the way to the corner, where they turned out of sight. Pain from an old ulcer began as acid churned in his stomach.

"Molly!" he called and started walking down the block. "Molly! Here, kitty, kitty."

He searched for her until well after dark.

Ned was up early the next morning and back outside looking. He scoured the block all the way to the corner, then came back the other way. In front of the drugstore, he encountered Monty again. The youth was alone this time, leaning up against the building, eating a jelly doughnut and drinking milk from a pint carton.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You still looking for that cat, old man?" Monty asked, his tone a mixture of incredulity and irritation.

"Yes."

"Man, why don't you go in the alley and get another one? There mus' be a dozen cats back there."

"I want this cat. It belonged to my wife when she was alive."

"Hell, man, a cat's a cat," Monty said.

Shavelson, the drugstore owner, came out, broom in hand. "Want to make half a buck sweeping the sidewalk?" he asked Monty, who looked at him as if he were an imbecile, then turned away disdainfully, not even dignifying the question with an answer. Shavelson shrugged and began sweeping debris toward the curb himself. "You're out early," he said to Ned.

"My cat's lost," Ned said. "She may have got out the bathroom window while I was downtown yesterday."

"Why don't you go back in the alley—"

Ned was already shaking his head. "I want *this* cat."

"Maybe the pound got her," Shavelson suggested. "Their truck was all over the neighborhood yesterday."

The storekeeper's words sent a chill along Ned's spine. "The pound?"

"Yeah. You know, the city animal shelter. They have a truck comes around—"

"It was here yesterday? On this block?"

"Yeah."

"Where do they take the animals they catch?" Ned asked out of a rapidly drying mouth.

"The animal shelter over on Twelfth Street, I think. They have to hold them there seventy-two hours to see if anybody claims them."

Too distressed by the thought to thank Shavelson, Ned hurried back up the street and into his building. Five minutes later, he emerged again, wearing a coat, his city bus pass in one hand. Crossing the street, he went to the bus stop and stood peering down the street, as if by sheer will he could make a bus appear.

Monty, having finished his doughnut and milk, sat on the curb in front of Shavelson's, smoking a cigarette and reading one of the morning editions from the drugstore's sidewalk newspaper rack. From time to time he glanced over at Ned, wondering at his concern over a cat. Monty knew a few back yards in the neighborhood that were knee-deep in cats.

Presently it began to sprinkle light rain. Monty stood up, folding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the newspaper, and handed it to Shavelson as the storekeeper came out to move his papers inside.

"You sure you're through with it?" Shavelson asked. "Any coupons or anything you'd like to tear out?"

Monty's eyes narrowed a fraction. "Someday, man, you're gonna say the wrong thing to me," he warned. "Then you're gonna come to open up your store and you gonna find a pile of ashes."

"You'd do that for *me?*" Shavelson retorted.

The sprinkle escalated to a drizzle as the storekeeper went back inside. From the doorway, Monty looked over at the bus stop again. Ned was still standing there, his only concession to the rain being a turned-up collar. I don't believe this old fool, Monty thought. He goes to more trouble for this cat than most people do for their kids.

Tossing his cigarette into the gutter, he trotted down the block and got into an old Chevy that had a pair of oversize velvet dice dangling from the rearview mirror. Revving the engine a little, he listened with satisfaction to the rumble of the car's gutted muffler, then made a U-turn from the curb and drove to the bus stop.

"Get in, old man," he said, leaning over to the passenger window. "I'm going past Twelfth Street—I'll give you a lift."

Ned eyed him suspiciously. "No, thanks. I'll wait for the bus."

"Hey, man, waiting for a bus in this city at your age ain't too smart. An old lady over on Bates Street *died* at a bus stop last week, she was there so long. Besides, in case you ain't noticed, it's raining." Monty's voice softened a touch. "Come on, get in."

Ned glanced up the street one last time, saw that there was still no bus in sight, thought of Molly caged up at the pound, and got in.

As they rode along, Monty lighted another cigarette and glanced over at his passenger. "You thought me and my boys did something with your cat, didn't you?"

"The thought did cross my mind," Ned admitted.

"Listen, I got better things to do with my time than mess with some cat. You know, for an old guy you ain't very smart."

Ned grunted softly. "I won't argue with you there," he said.

On Twelfth, Monty pulled to the curb in front of the animal shelter. "I got to go see a guy near here, take me about fifteen minutes. I'll come back and pick you up after you get your cat."

Ned studied him for a moment. "Is there some kind of Teenager of the Year award I don't know about?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Very funny, man. You're a regular, what's his name, Jack Albertson, ain't you?"

At the information counter in the animal shelter a woman with tightly styled hair and a superior attitude asked, "Was the animal wearing a license tag on its collar?"

"No, she—"

"Was the animal wearing an ID tag on its collar?"

"No, she wasn't wearing a collar. She's really an apartment cat, you see—"

"Sir," the woman said, "our animal enforcement officers don't go into apartments and take animals."

"I think she got out the bathroom window."

"That makes her a street animal, unlicensed and unidentifiable."

"Oh, I can identify her," Ned assured the woman. "And she'll come to me when I call her. If you'll just let me see the cats you picked up yesterday—"

"Sir, do you have any idea how many stray animals are picked up by our trucks every day?"

"Why, no, I never gave—"

"*Hundreds,*" he was told. "Only the ones with license tags or ID tags are kept at the shelter."

"I thought all animals had to be kept here for three days to give their owners time to claim them," Ned said, remembering what Shavelson had told him.

"You're not listening, sir. Only the animals with license or ID tags are kept at the shelter for the legally required seventy-two hours. Those without tags are taken directly to the disposal pound."

Ned turned white. "Is that where they—where they—?" The words would not form.

"Yes, that is where stray animals are put to sleep." She paused a beat. "Either that or sold."

Ned frowned. "Sold."

"Yes, sir. To laboratories. To help offset the overhead of operating our department." Her eyes flicked over Ned's shabby clothing. "Tax dollars don't pay for *everything,* you know." But she had unknowingly given Ned an ember of hope.

"Can you give me the address of this—disposal place?"

The woman scribbled an address on a slip of paper and pushed it across the counter to him. "Your cat might still be there," she allowed, "if it was picked up late yesterday. Disposal hours for cats

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are from one to three. If it was a dog you'd be out of luck. They do dogs at night, eight to eleven, because there are more of them. That's because they're easier to catch. They trust people. Cats, they don't trust—"

She was still talking as Ned snatched up the address and hurried out.

Monty was waiting at the curb.

"I didn't think you'd be back this quick," Ned said, getting into the car.

"The guy I went to see wasn't there," Monty told him. It was a lie. All he had done was drive around the block.

"They've taken my cat to be gassed," Ned said urgently, "but if I can get there in time I might be able to save her." He handed Monty the slip of paper. "This is the address. It's way out at the edge of town, but if you'll take me there I'll pay you." He pulled out a pathetically worn billfold, the old-fashioned kind that zipped around three sides. When he opened it, Monty could see several faded cellophane inserts with photographs in them. The photographs were old, all in black-and-white except for a paper picture of June Allyson that had come with the billfold.

From the currency pocket Ned extracted some bills, all of them singles. "I don't have much because I haven't cashed my check yet. But I can at least buy you some gas."

Monty pushed away the hand with the money and started the car. "I don't *buy* gas, man," he scoffed, "I quit buying it when it got to a dollar a gallon."

"Where do you get it?" Ned asked.

"I siphon it. From police cars parked behind the precinct station. It's the only place where cars are left on a lot unguarded." He flashed a smile at Ned. "That's because nobody would *dare* siphon gas from a cop car, you know what I mean?"

They got on one of the expressways and drove toward the edge of the city. As Monty drove, he smoked and kept time to rock music from the radio by drumming his fingers on the steering wheel. Ned glanced at a scar down the youth's right cheek. Thin and straight, almost surgical in appearance, it had probably been put there by a straight razor. Ned had been curious about the scar for a long time. Now would be an opportune time to ask how he got it, but Ned was too concerned about Molly. She was such an old cat, nearly fourteen. He hoped she hadn't died of a stroke from the trauma of being

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

captured and caged. If she was still alive, she was going to be so glad to see him Ned doubted she would ever climb out the bathroom window again.

After half an hour on the expressway, Monty exited and drove them to a large warehouselike building at the edge of the city's water-treatment center. A sign above the entrance read simply: *Animal Shelter—Unit F.*

F for final, Ned thought. He was already opening his door as Monty brought the car to a full stop.

"Want me to come in with you?" Monty asked.

"What for?" Ned wanted to know, frowning.

The younger man shrugged. "So's they don't push you around. Sometimes people push old guys around."

"Really?" Ned asked wryly.

Monty looked off at nothing. "You want me to come in or not?"

"I can handle things myself," Ned told him gruffly.

The clerk at this counter, a thin gum-chewing young man with half a dozen ballpoints in a plastic holder in his shirt pocket, checked a clipboard on the wall and said, "Nope, you're too late. That whole bunch from yesterday was shipped out to one of our lab customers early this morning."

Ned felt warm and slightly nauseated. "Do you think they might sell my cat back to me?" he asked. "If I went over there?"

"You can't go over there," the clerk said. "We're not allowed to divulge the name or address of any of our lab customers."

"Oh." Ned wet his lips. "Do you suppose you could call them for me? Tell them I'd like to make some kind of arrangements to buy back my cat?"

The clerk was already shaking his head. "I don't have time to do things like that, mister."

"A simple phone call," Ned pleaded. "It'll only take—"

"Look, mister, I said no. I'm a very busy person."

Just then someone stepped up to the counter next to Ned. Surprised, Ned saw that it was Monty. He had his hands on the counter, palms down, and was smiling at the clerk.

"What time you get off work, Very Busy Person?" he asked.

The clerk blinked rapidly. "Uh, why do you want to know?"

"I'm jus' interested in what kind of hours a Very Busy Person like you keeps." Monty's smile faded and his stare grew cold. "You don't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have to tell me if you don't want to. I can wait outside and find out for myself."

The clerk stopped chewing his gum; the color disappeared from his face, leaving him sickly pale. "Why, uh—why would you do that?"

"'Cause I ain't got nothing better to do," Monty replied. "I *was* gonna take this old man here to that lab to try and get his cat back. But if he don't know where it is, I can't do that. So I'll just hang around here." He winked at the clerk without smiling. "See you later, man."

Monty took Ned's arm and started him toward the door.

"Just—wait a minute," the clerk said.

Monty and Ned turned back to see him rummaging in a drawer under the counter. He found a sheet of paper with three names and addresses mimeographed on it. With a ballpoint from the selection in his shirt pocket, he circled one of the addresses. Monty stepped back to the counter and took the sheet of paper.

"If it turns out they're expecting us," Monty said, "I'll know who warned them. You take my meaning, man?"

The clerk nodded. He swallowed dryly and his gum was gone.

At the door, looking at the address circled on the paper, Monty said, "Come on, old man. This here place is clear across town. You positive one of them cats in the alley wouldn't do you?"

On their way to the lab, Ned asked, "Why are you helping me like this?"

Monty shrugged. "It's a slow Wednesday, man."

Ned studied the younger man for a time, then observed, "You're different when your gang's not around."

Monty tossed him a smirk. "You gonna, what do you call it, analyze me, old man? You gonna tell me I got 'redeeming social values' or something like that?"

"I wouldn't go quite that far," Ned said dryly. "Anyway, sounds to me like you've *been* analyzed."

"Lots of times," Monty told him. "When they took me away from my old lady because it was an 'unfit environment,' they had some shrink analyze me then. When I ran away from the foster homes I was put in, other shrinks analyzed me. After I was arrested and was waiting trial in juvenile court for some burglaries, I was analyzed again. When they sent me downstate to the reformatory, I was analyzed. They're very big on analyzing in this state."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"They ever tell you the results of all that analyzing?"

"Sure. I'm incorrigible. And someday I'm supposed to develop into a sociopath. You know what that is?"

"Not exactly," Ned admitted.

Monty shrugged. "Me neither. I guess I'll find out when I become one."

They rode in silence for a few moments and then Ned said, "Well, anyway, I appreciate you helping me."

"Forget it," Monty said. He would not look at Ned; his eyes were straight ahead on the road. After several seconds, he added, "Jus' don't go telling nobody about it."

"All right, I won't," Ned agreed.

Their destination on the other side of the city was a large square two-story building on the edge of a forest preserve. It was surrounded by a chain-link fence with an entrance gate manned by a security guard. A sign on the gate read: *Consumer Evaluation Laboratory.*

Monty parked outside the gate and followed Ned over to the security-guard post. Ned explained what he wanted. The security guard took off his cap and scratched his head. "I don't know. This isn't covered in my guard manual. I'll have to call and find out if they sell animals back."

Ned and Monty waited while the guard telephoned. He talked to one person, was transferred to another, then had to repeat his story to still a third before he finally hung up and said, "Mr. Hartley of Public Relations is coming out to talk to you."

Mr. Hartley was a pleasant but firmly uncooperative man. "I'm sorry, but we can't help you," he said when Ned had told him of Molly's plight. "We have at least a hundred small animals in there—cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs—all of them undergoing scientific tests. Even the shipment we received this morning has already been processed into a testing phase. We simply can't interrupt the procedure to find one particular cat."

"But it's *my* cat," Ned insisted. "She's not homeless or a stray. She belonged to my late wife—"

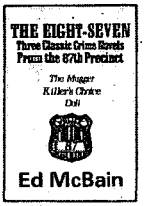
"I understand that, Mr. Price," Hartley interrupted, "but the animal *was* outside with no license or ID tag around its neck. It was apprehended legally and sold to us legally. I'm afraid it's just too late."

As they were talking, a bus pulled up to the gate. Hartley waved at the driver, then turned to the security guard. "These are the

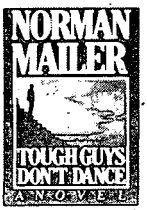
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Come share a generous serving of **the most thrilling villainies,**

⊗ Explicit scenes and language may be offensive to some.



3236 Spec. ed.

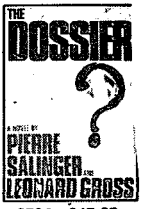


3301 $16.95

3210 $12.95

2139 $15.95

2964 Spec. ed.



2584 $15.95

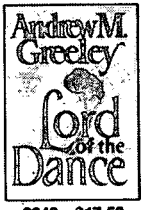
1743 $15.95

2238 $15.95

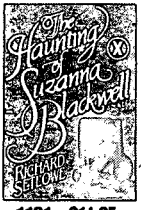
0448 $15.95

0273 $14.95

0364 $12.95



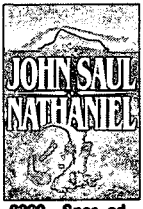
0943 $17.50



1131 $14.95

2709 $11.95

2261 $15.95

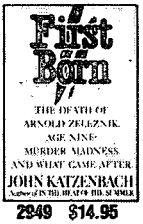


2030 Spec. ed.

1446 $12.95

0901 $15.95

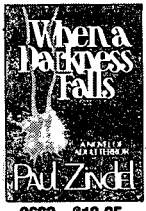
0224 $15.95



2949 $14.95

1727 $14.95

3087 $13.95



2600 $13.95

2055 $11.95

How The Mystery Guild works: Get 6 exciting books for 99¢ (plus shipping and handling) PLUS a *free* tote bag when accepted as a member. We reserve the right to reject any application. However, once accepted as a member, if you are not satisfied, return the books at Club expense within 10 days. Your membership will be cancelled and you'll owe nothing.

Big selection, big savings! About every 4 weeks (14 times a year), you'll get the Club bulletin describing the 2 featured Selections and Alternates. Plus, up to 4 times a year, you may receive offers of special Selections—all at discounts off publishers' prices. To get the 2 featured Selections, do nothing; they'll be shipped automatically. If you prefer an Alternate or no book at all, return the form provided with your preference by the date specified. That date allows you 10 days to decide. If you have less than 10 days and get an unwanted Selection, return it at Club expense and owe nothing. A shipping and handling charge is added to all shipments.

Easy purchase plan! You need buy only 4 books at regular low Club prices during your first year of membership; then continue to enjoy Club benefits without obligation or resign at any time. The Mystery Guild offers complete, hardbound editions, sometimes altered in size to fit special presses and save you even more.

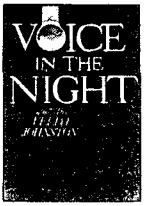
Club editions save you up to 60% off publishers' list prices quoted above.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

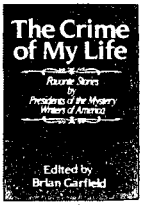
he most dastardly deeds." — Alfred Hitchcock

463 $12.95

2154 $14.95



5603 $12.95



2093 $13.95

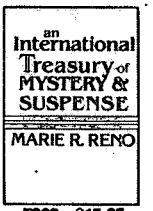
1974 $16.95

2956 $15.95

1453 $12.95

2279 Spec. ed.

2071 $11.95



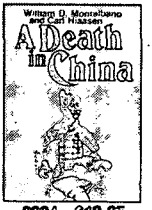
7260 $15.95

6705 $ 6.50

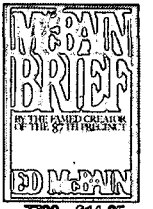
1633 $16.95

865 $17.95

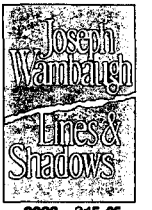
2717 $11.95



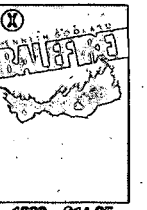
2384 $13.95



7709 $14.95



0232 $15.95



1039 $14.95

6 books for only 99¢

with membership Values up to $102.25 in Publishers' Editions

FREE TOTE BAG with membership

THE MYSTERY GUILD®

Dept. RR-888, Garden City, N.Y. 11530

Please accept my application for membership in The Mystery Guild and send me the 6 books indicated below. Bill me only 99¢ (plus shipping and handling). I understand that I need buy only 4 books at regular low Club prices during the first year of my membership to complete my commitment. My membership will be subject to the terms and conditions presented in this ad.

No-risk guarantee: If not delighted after examining my 6 selections, I may return the books within 10 days at Club expense. My membership will be cancelled and I will owe nothing. I may keep the tote bag.

Mr.
Ms. _____
(Please print)

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Members accepted in U.S.A. and Canada only. Canadian members will be serviced from Canada. Offer slightly different in Canada.

35-MG75

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people from Diamonds-and-Pearls Cosmetics, Fred. Pass them through and then call Mr. Draper. He's conducting a tour for them."

As the bus passed through, Hartley turned back to resume the argument with Ned, but Monty stepped forward to intercede.

"We understand, Mr. Hartley," Monty said in a remarkably civil tone. "We're sure you'd help us if you could. Please accept our apology for taking up your time." Monty offered his hand.

"Quite all right," Hartley said, shaking hands.

Ned was staring incredulously at Monty. Macho had suddenly become Milquetoast.

"Come along, old fellow," Monty said, putting an arm around Ned's shoulders. "We'll go to a pet store and buy you a new kitty."

Ned allowed himself to be led back to the car, then demanded, "What the hell's got into you?"

"You're wasting your time with that joker," Monty said. "He's been programmed to smile and say no to whatever you want. We got to find some other way to get your cat."

"What other way?"

Monty grinned. "Like using the back door, man."

Driving away from the front gate, Monty found a gravel road and slowly circled the fenced-in area of the Consumer Evaluation Laboratory. On each side of the facility, beyond its fence, were several warehouses and small plants. In front, beyond a feeder road, was a state highway. Growing right up to its rear fence was the forest preserve: a state-protected wooded area.

Monty made one full circuit of the complex occupied by the laboratory and its neighbors, then said, "I think the best plan is to park in the woods, get past the fence in back, and sneak in that way."

"You mean slip in and *steal* my cat?" Ned asked.

Monty shrugged. "They stole her from you," he said.

Ned stared at him. "I'm sixty-two years old," he said. "I've never broken the law in my life."

"So?" said Monty, frowning. He did not see any relevance. The two men, one young, one old, each so different from the other, locked eyes in a silent stare for what seemed like a long time.

They were parked on the shoulder of the gravel road, the car windows down. The air coming into the car was fresh from the morning rain. Ned detected the scent of wet earth. Some movement a few yards up the road caught his eye and he turned his attention away from Monty. The movement was a gray squirrel scurrying across the road to the safety of the nearby woods. Watching the little

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

animal, wild and free, made Ned think of the animals in the laboratory that were not free—the dogs and rabbits and guinea pigs.

And cats.

"All right," he told Monty. "Let's go in the back way."

Monty parked in one of the public picnic areas. From the trunk, he removed a pair of chain cutters and held them under his jacket with one hand.

"What do you carry those things for?" Ned asked, and realized at once that his question was naive.

"To clip coupons with, man," Monty replied. "Coupons save you money on everyday necessities."

The two men made their way through the trees to the rear of the laboratory's chain-link fence. Crouching, they scrutinized the back of the complex. Monty's eyes settled immediately on a loading dock served by a single-lane driveway coming around one side of the building. "We can go in there," he said. "Overhang doors are no sweat to open. But first let's see if there's any juice in this fence." Keeping his hands well on the rubber-covered handles, he gently touched the metal fence with the tip of the chain cutters. The contact drew no sparks. "Nothing on the surface," he said. "Let's see if there's anything inside. Some of these newer chain-links have an insulated circuit running through them." Quickly and expertly, he spread the cutters and snipped one link of the metal. Again there were no sparks. "This is going to be a breeze."

With a practiced eye, he determined his pattern and quickly snipped exactly the number of links necessary to create an opening large enough for them to get through. Then he gripped the cut section and bent it open, like a door, about eight inches. The chain cutters he hid nearby in some weeds.

"Now here's our story," he said to Ned. "We was walking through the public woods here and saw this hole cut in the fence, see? We thought it was our civic duty to tell somebody about it, so we came inside looking for somebody. If we get caught, stick to that story. Got it?"

"Got it," Ned confirmed.

Monty winked approval. "Le's do it, old man."

They eased through the opening and Monty bent the cut section back into place. Then they started toward the loading dock, walking upright with no attempt at hurrying or hiding. Ned was nervous but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Monty remained very cool; he even whistled a soft little tune. When he sensed Ned's anxiety, he threw him a grin.

"Relax, old man. It'll take us forty, maybe fifty seconds to reach that dock. The chances of somebody seeing us in that little bit of time are so tiny, man. And even if they do, so what? We got our story, right?"

"Yeah, right," Ned replied, trying to sound confident.

But as Monty predicted, they reached the loading dock unobserved and unchallenged. Once up on the dock, Monty peered through a small window in one of the doors. "Just a big room with a lot of work tables," he said quietly. "Don't look like nobody's around. Hey, this service door's unlocked. Come on."

They moved inside into a large room equipped with butcher-block tables fixed to a tile floor. A number of hoses hung over each table, connected to the ceiling. As the two men stood scrutinizing the room, they suddenly heard a voice approaching. Quickly they ducked behind one of the tables.

An inner door opened and a man led a group of people into the room, saying, "This is our receiving area, ladies and gentlemen. The animals we purchase are delivered here and our laboratory technicians use these tables to wash and delouse them. They are then taken into our testing laboratory next door, which I will show you next. If you would, please take a smock from the pile there, to protect your clothes from possible contact with any of the substances we use in there."

Peering around the table, Ned and Monty watched as the people put on smocks and regrouped at the door. As they were filing out, Ned nudged Monty and said, "Come on."

Monty grinned. "You catching on, old man."

The two put on smocks and fell in at the rear of the group. They followed along as it was led through the hall and into a much larger room. This one was set up with a series of aisles formed by long work counters on which stood wire-grille cages of various sizes. Each cage was numbered and had a small slot containing a white card on its door. In each cage was a live animal.

"Our testing facility, we feel, is the best of its kind currently in existence," the tour guide said. "As you can see, we have a variety of test animals: cats, dogs, rabbits, guinea pigs. We also have access to larger animals, if a particular test requires it. Our testing procedures can be in any form. We can force-feed the test substance, introduce it by forced inhalation, reduce it to a dermal form and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

apply it directly to an animal's shaved skin, or inject it intravenously. Over here, for instance, are rabbits being given what is known as a Draize test. A new hairspray is being sprayed into their very sensitive eyes in order to gauge its irritancy level. Just behind the rabbits you see a group of puppies having dishwashing detergent introduced directly into their stomachs by a syringe with a tube attached to a hand pump. This is called an Internal LD-50 test; the LD stands for lethal dose and the number fifty represents one-half of a group of one hundred animals on which the test will be conducted. When half of the test group has died, we will have an accurate measurement of the toxity level of this product. This will provide the company marketing the product with evidence of safety testing in case it is later sued because some child swallows the detergent and dies. During the course of the testing, we also learn exactly how a particular substance will affect a living body, by observing whatever symptoms the animal exhibits: convulsions, paralysis, tremors, inability to breathe, blindness as in the case of the rabbits there—"

Ned was staring at the scene around him. As he looked at the helpless, caged, tortured animals, he felt his skin crawl. Which were the animals, the ones in the cages, or the ones outside the cages? Glancing at Monty, he saw the younger man was reacting the same way—his eyes were wide, his expression incredulous, and his hands were curled into fists.

"We can test virtually any substance or product there is," the guide continued. "We test all forms of cosmetics and beauty aids, all varieties of detergents and other cleaning products, every food additive, coloring, and preservative, any new chemical or drug product—you name it. In addition to servicing private business, we test pesticides for the Environmental Protection Agency, synthetic substances for the Food and Drug Administration, and a variety of products for the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Our facility is set up so that almost no lead time is required to service our customers. As an example of this, a dozen cats brought in this morning are already in a testing phase over here—"

Ned and Monty followed the group to another aisle where the guide pointed out the newly arrived cats and explained the test being applied to them. Ned strained to see beyond the people in front of him, trying to locate Molly.

Finally the tour guide said, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you'll follow me, I'll take you to our cafeteria, where you can enjoy some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refreshments while our testing personnel answer any questions you have about how we can help Diamonds-and-Pearls Cosmetics keep its products free of costly lawsuits. Just drop your smocks on the table outside the door."

Again Ned and Monty ducked down behind a workbench to conceal themselves as the people filed out of the room. When the door closed behind the group, Ned rose and hurried to the cat cages. Monty went over to lock the laboratory door.

Ned found Molly in one of the top cages. She was lying on her side, eyes wide, staring into space. The back part of her body had been shaved and three intravenous needles were stuck in her skin and held in place by tape. The tubes attached to the needles ran out the grille and up to three small bottles suspended above the cage. They were labeled: FRAGRANCE, DYE, and POLYSORBATE 93.

Ned wiped his eyes with the heel of one hand. Unlatching the grille door, he reached in and stroked Molly. "Hello, old girl," he said. Molly opened her mouth to meow, but no sound came.

"Dirty bastards," Ned heard Monty whisper. Turning, he saw the younger man reading the card on the front of Molly's cage. "This is some stuff that's going to be used in a hair tint," he said. "This test is to see if the cat can stay alive five hours with this combination of stuff in her."

"I can answer that," Ned said. "She won't. She's barely alive now."

"If we can get her to a vet, maybe he can save her," Monty suggested. "Pump her stomach or something." He bobbed his chin at the back wall. "We can get out through one of those windows—they face our hole in the fence."

"Get one open," Ned said. "I'll take Molly out."

Monty hurried over to the window while Ned gently unfastened the tape and pulled the hypodermic needles out of Molly's flesh. Once again the old cat looked at him and tried to make a sound, but she was too weak and too near death. "I know, old girl," Ned said softly. "I know it hurts."

Near the window, after opening it, Monty noticed several cages containing puppies that were up and moving around, some of them barking and wagging their tails. Monty quickly opened their cages, scooped them out two at a time, and dropped them out the window.

"Lead these pups to the fence, old man," he said as Ned came over with Molly.

"Right," Ned replied. He let Monty hold the dying cat as he pain-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fully got his arthritic legs over the ledge and lowered himself to the ground. "What about you?" he asked as Monty handed down the cat.

"I'm gonna turn a few more pups loose, an' maybe some of those rabbits they're blinding. You head for the fence—I'll catch up."

Ned limped away from the building, calling the pups to follow him. He led them to the fence, bent the cut section open again, and let them scurry through. As he went through himself, he could feel Molly becoming ever more limp in his hands. By the time he got into the cover of the trees, her eyes had closed, her mouth had opened, and she was dead. Tears coming again, he knelt and put the cat up against a tree trunk and covered her with an old red bandanna he pulled out of his back pocket.

Looking through the fence, he saw that Monty was still putting animals out the window. Two dozen cats, dogs, rabbits, and guinea pigs were moving around tentatively on the grass behind the laboratory. He's got to get out of there or he'll get caught, Ned thought. Returning through the opening in the fence, he hurried back to the window.

"Come on," he urged as the younger man came to the window with a kitten in each hand.

"No—" Monty tossed the kittens to the ground "—I'm going to turn loose every animal that can stand!"

Old man and young man fixed eyes on each other as every difference there had ever been between them faded.

"Give me a hand up, then," Ned said.

Monty reached down and pulled him back up through the window.

As they worked furiously to open more cages and move their captives out the window, they became aware of someone trying the lab door and finding it locked. Several moments later, someone tried it again. A voice outside the door mentioned a key. The two inside the lab worked all the faster. Finally, a sweating Monty said, "I think that's all we can let go. The rest are too near dead. Let's get out of here!"

"I'm going to do one more thing first," Ned growled.

Poised by the open window, Monty asked, "What?"

Ned walked toward a shelf on which stood several plastic gallon jugs of isopropyl alcohol. "I'm going to burn this son-of-a-bitch down."

Monty rushed over to him. "What about the other animals?"

"You said yourself they were almost dead. At least this will put them out of their misery without any more torture." He opened a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

jug and started pouring alcohol around the room. After a moment of indecision, Monty joined him.

Five minutes later, just as someone in the hall got the lab door open and several people entered, Ned and Monty dropped out the open window and tossed a lighted book of matches back inside.

The laboratory became a ball of flame.

While the fire spread and the building burned, Ned and Monty managed to get the released animals through the fence and into the woods. Sirens of fire and police emergency vehicles pierced the quiet afternoon. There were screams and shouts as the burning building was evacuated. Monty retrieved the chain cutters and ran toward the car. Ned limped hurriedly after him, but stopped when he got to where Molly was lying under the red bandanna. I can't leave her like that, he thought. She had been a good, loving pet to Ned's wife, then to Ned after his wife died. She deserved to be buried, not left to rot next to a tree. Dropping to his knees, he began to dig a grave with his hands.

Monty rushed back and saw what he was doing. "They gonna catch you, old man!" he warned.

"I don't care."

Ned kept digging as Monty hurried away.

He had barely finished burying Molly a few minutes later when the police found him.

Ned's sentence, because he was a first offender and no one had been hurt in the fire, was three years. He served fourteen months. Monty was waiting for him the day he came back to the block.

"Hey, old man, ex-cons give a neighborhood a bad reputation," Monty chided.

"You ought to know," Ned said gruffly.

"You get the Vienna sausages and crackers and stuff I had sent from the commissary?"

"Yeah." He did not bother to thank Monty; he knew it would only embarrass him.

"So how you like the joint, old man?"

Ned shrugged. "It could have been worse. A sixty-two-year-old man with a game leg, there's not much they could do to me. I worked in the library, checking books out. Did a lot of reading in between. Mostly about animals."

"No kidding?" Monty's eyebrows went up. "I been learning a little bit about animals, too. I'm a, what do you call it, volunteer down at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the A.S.P.C.A. That's American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."

"I know what it is," said Ned. "Good organization. Say, did that Consumer Evaluation Laboratory ever rebuild?"

"Nope," Monty replied. "You put 'em out of business for good, old man."

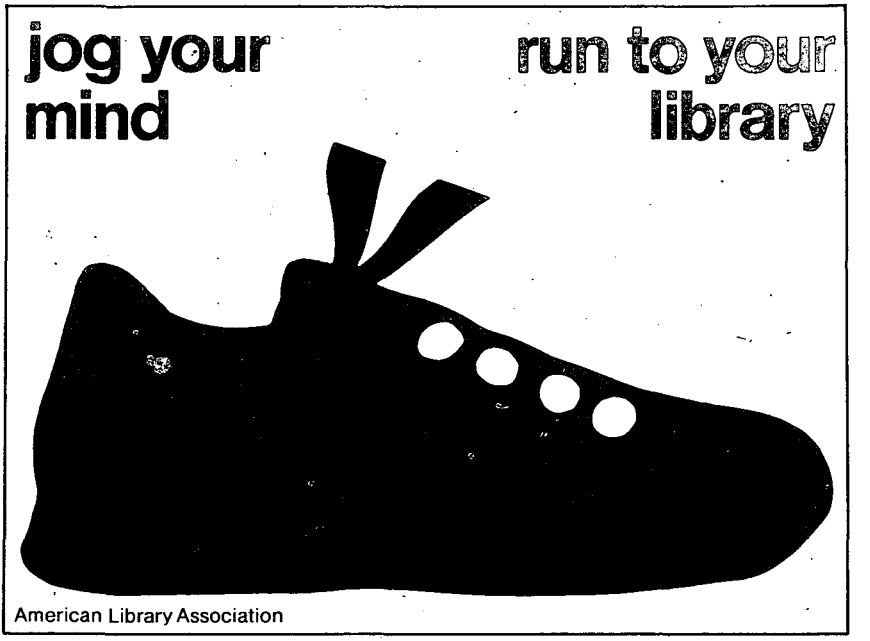
"Animal shelter still selling to those other two labs?"

"Far as I know."

"Still got their addresses?"

Monty smiled. "You bet."

"Good," Ned said, nodding. Then he smiled, too.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* short story by

SHIZUKO NATSUKI

A cautionary crime tale about stairs from Japan's bestselling Shizuko Natsuki, whose Murder at Mt. Fuji *was published by St. Martin's last year . . .*

THE STAIRS

by SHIZUKO NATSUKI

I first started thinking about the possibility of an accident on the stairs that morning when my daughter Yukiko tripped on the way down from her bedroom.

Yukiko is in the fifth grade and leaves home at about eight o'clock just as I am leaving for the boutique. This particular morning I was at the front door putting on my shoes when she came running along the landing, dragging a heavy briefcase and a canvas schoolbag. Halfway down the stairs, the buckle of the briefcase caught on the carpet and she slipped and almost fell.

"Watch out!" Kimie who was vacuuming the living-room carpet and I called out in unison, but Yukiko, with a child's agility, had already managed to grab the wall and right herself. The contents of her briefcase were scattered all over the place, but she was all right. Still, I couldn't help but think how dangerous the stairs were. I had originally had them carpeted in an effort to make them safer, but now the carpet was worn in places, so the stairs were probably more dangerous than before. Not only are they very steep, but one side is open to the living room without so much as a handrail and the area at the bottom is tiled with stone.

This wasn't the first time I had thought about the danger of the stairs and I decided then and there to phone a carpenter to put runners on each of the steps and fit a handrail on the open side. The

© 1985 by Shizuko Natsuki.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

carpenter agreed to do the work, but said he was busy and wouldn't be able to do the job for another three days.

By the time I had agreed to that and hung up, our housekeeper Kimie had finished vacuuming the living room. She lives with us, and although she is well over fifty she never so much as catches a cold and is a very hard worker. She virtually runs the house and looks after both Yukiko and me so well I go to my boutique in Roppongi without worrying. Things were very difficult for me when my husband died five years ago, but now thanks to Kimie Yukiko and I live a fairly normal life.

Of course, this is not to say that she is perfect. Everyone has at least one fault, and Kimie's is that it seems as if every time she opens her mouth it is to boast about her late husband. He was a civil servant at a town somewhere in Nagano Prefecture when he died in a fire at the Town Hall where he worked.

"Not only was he a hard worker with a great sense of responsibility," Kimie loves to tell us, "he was very popular with his superiors, as well as with the younger people. And even though he was still only in his forties, everyone said he would be the next Assistant Mayor. However, when the fire broke out, his sense of responsibility got the better of him. He not only managed to save all the important documents, but he also tried to get everyone else out safely—and ended up unable to get out himself."

Goodness knows how many times I've heard this story. I wouldn't mind so much, but she insists on telling it to everyone who visits the house, even if it's someone she has never met before. I wince when I hear her start, but it's the only thing that keeps her going every day and I must admit that if I were in the same situation, I would probably boast about him, too.

Anyway, as Yukiko and I left the house that morning, I tried to tell myself there was nothing to worry about, but in reality it wasn't an ordinary day in that it was the first time Tetsuo had spent the night at our house. Yukiko was very grown up for her age and I couldn't see her slipping like that unless she was worried about something. I wondered if she had walked past the guest room during the night and heard something.

Whatever the case, I felt nervous all day. And then I received the phone call from Kimie.

"You look as white as a sheet. Have you had some bad news?" asked the girl who helps me in the shop.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I turned to her vacantly. "There was an accident on the stairs at home."

"What?"

"A house guest. He fell down the stairs and broke his neck."

Even though I took a taxi, it took me over an hour and it was almost five o'clock by the time I got home.

There was no sign of the doctor Kimie had called, but in his place was a detective named Ueda and three officers from the local police station. Tetsuo, Detective Ueda told me, had been beyond help when the doctor arrived and Kimie explained what had happened.

"You told me not to disturb him, so I let him sleep in." Her swarthy face glamed with perspiration. "He finally came down about half past eleven and I gave him breakfast in the kitchen."

I made an effort to keep myself under control, but all I could think was: If only I hadn't asked him here. The reason I had was because we hadn't been able to finish the monthly accounts at the shop, and since he lived even farther from the boutique than I do I invited him to finish them here and then sleep as late in the morning as he wanted.

"He finished his meal," Kimie was saying, "about one o'clock and went back upstairs, saying he still had some work to do. I tidied up in the kitchen and then went out shopping." I supposed the reason Tetsuo had taken an hour and a half to finish his meal was that Kimie had kept him in the kitchen with stories about her late husband. "I went to the supermarket on the other side of town and didn't get back until almost three. When I opened the front door—"

As was to be expected, Kimie's voice became very strained as she described how she had found Tetsuo.

He had been lying on his back with his head bent at an unnatural angle and a trickle of blood running from his nose across his pale cheek. He was wearing his suit and his long legs were sprawled on the bottom steps of the stairs, One slipper had come off and was lying a distance away down the hall.

"I was shaking like a leaf, but I telephoned Doctor Yamano straightaway. My late husband used to say that if you come across a sick person or someone who has been injured, it's best to call a doctor without trying to do anything yourself. An amateur is likely to do more harm than good if he tries to give first aid without knowing what's wrong."

Kimie had rung me at the shop directly after she rang the doctor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The doctor had arrived about ten minutes laer, but Tetsuo was already dead. It was the doctor who had phoned the police.

"Where is Tetsuo now?"

"Doctor Yamano and the detectives carried him through to the back room."

"Has Yukiko come home yet?"

"Yes, she came back about four o'clock. The police were still examining the body and she had a horrible shock. She went up and locked herself in her room. I took her a cup of tea, but she told me she didn't want it."

I started toward the stairs, but changed my mind and walked through to the back room instead.

Tetsuo was laid out in front of the family shrine with his head facing to the north as is dictated by Buddhist custom. He was still wearing his suit, but his head and shoulders were shrouded with a white sheet.

I slumped down beside him. I felt faint and my heart began to pound, but even so I was surprised that I wasn't more upset than I was. For the first time, I realized the distance that had stood between us.

He was ten years younger than I—only twenty-seven or twenty-eight. I first met him about a year ago when he came into the shop to buy a sports shirt—I buy and sell clothes for both sexes.

After that, he came in regularly every four or five days and I realized that he was interested in me. Then, about six months ago, we ran into each other in the coffee bar beneath my boutique and we talked. That was when I learned he was an aspiring actor and that his agent had his office nearby. Once he mentioned it, I realized I had seen him playing bit parts on television. He was tall and handsome and had a slightly western look about him that should have made him a big success, but he had a rather weak personality and that came across on the screen and spoiled the image.

Soon after that, he lured me into bed with him, and when I learned that he had worked as an accountant after he graduated university I suggested he help me balance the books at the end of each month.

Kimie, Yukiko, and the girl in the shop all knew about Tetsuo, but of course no one knew we were lovers. Yukiko had come out to dinner with us a few times and seemed to like him very much. But what if she had heard us in the guest room the night before? A horrible thought sprang to my mind and I stood up and moved away from the body. I didn't have the courage to remove the sheet and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

look at his face and I realized my feelings for him had not been very deep after all.

Opening the door, I had another shock. Yukiko was standing in the darkened hall. She had changed out of her school uniform and was wearing a cream-colored dress with floral embroidery. Her hair, which she wore in braids when she went to school, fell loose to her shoulders and she looked even younger than usual. Her eyes were rimmed with red and it was obvious she had been crying.

"Why are you standing out here, Yukiko?"

Clutching me, she sobbed, "Poor Uncle Tetsuo."

I put an arm around her and patted her delicate shoulder to calm her down, and as I did I found myself unable to believe my suspicions of a few moments ago. Yukiko was an ordinary, innocent girl, grieving the death of her mother's younger friend. I was ashamed of myself for believing, even for a moment, that she could have had anything to do with his death. And as the mimutes passed, I felt myself affected by her tears and my own began to start.

After a while I took Yukiko up to her bedroom and went back down to face Detective Ueda, who was being entertained by Kimie with tea and conversation in the living room.

"It would appear that he fell on the stairs and broke his neck when his head hit the tiled floor," Ueda told me as Kimie went to the kitchen. "There are more accidents of this sort than you might think. Last year alone, more than six hundred people fell to their deaths on stairs in this country. Not all the victims were elderly people or children, either. And over two-thirds of them were men."

Placing a cigarette in his mouth, Detective Ueda turned to look at the stairs beyond the doorway. "Not only that, but more than half the cases occurred in the home and from quite a low step at that. They say that the second or third step is the most dangerous."

"I'm sure that's what happened here. Tetsuo had never been here before. He wasn't used to the house."

With the attention focused on Tetsuo again, Detective Ueda asked me what I knew about him.

"Not very much, I'm afraid. He told me he was the second son of a wealthy farmer in Nagano Prefecture and after attending university in Tokyo, he started work in an accountant's office. But he had always wanted to become an actor and one day he took the plunge and registered with an acting agency. I've known him for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some time and thought him quite trustworthy, so I asked him to help with my shop's accounts."

"He was single?"

"Yes, that's right. He lived alone in an apartment in Shibuya. He used to pop into the shop in his free time to help me with the accounts, but yesterday we were working on the month-end accounts and stayed quite late, so I asked him back here to stay over."

Ueda asked me a few questions about Kimie, but didn't pursue the subject very long. I guessed that he had already heard more than he wanted to know from Kimie herself.

"You also have a daughter, I believe?"

"Yes."

"I don't know if we will perform an autopsy or not. That will be decided at the police station. But I will be in touch with you as soon as I know."

As it turned out, there wasn't an autopsy. An external examination confirmed that all the injuries were consistent with those caused by a fall, and as they didn't have any evidence to the contrary it was put down as accidental death.

Tetsuo's body was cremated in Tokyo and his ashes were taken by his parents, who came in from the country for the funeral. He hadn't been popular enough as an actor to be written about in the gossip magazines and it would appear that this was the end of the story, but for some reason I found that the suspicion of foul play that lurked deep inside me grew day by day.

The reason lay with Yukiko. Although she had come to me on the day Tetsuo died with her eyes swollen from crying, she seemed to forget all about him in two or three days. She didn't change her attitude toward me, but her reaction to Kimie altered. She seemed to be avoiding her. She wouldn't look her straight in the eye and all the things she used to ask Kimie to do she started to do for herself. Two days after the accident, she went to the hairdresser's on her own and had her hair cut, even though she had been enthusiastically growing it since the summer before. She said she did it because it would be too hot in the coming summer, but it occurred to me it was because she found it disagreeable to have Kimie plait it for her every morning before going to school.

Once again the fear started to grow inside me. Yukiko is very mature for her age and it wasn't impossible that she could have started to hate Tetsuo when she realized his relationship with me.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She could have come home from school early that day and gone straight up to her room. When she heard Tetsuo start downstairs she could have followed him and pushed him from behind. To push someone to their death from the stairs is a method that could easily have been thought of by an eleven-year-old child.

But suppose that at the very moment Yukiko pushed him, Kimie had come home from shopping? Kimie would have kept quiet about it to protect Yukiko, but all the same Yukiko could be expected to feel uncomfortable in her presence.

About ten days after the accident, I decided to visit one of Yukiko's friends who lived about a quarter of a mile from us.

When this girl, Sachiko, answered my questions, I felt quite faint for a few minutes. After that I made my decision.

The next day was a Sunday, and as the weather was good I asked Yukiko if she would like to go for a walk with me.

The area we live in is very quiet and we met no one else on the street. The small park nearby was deserted and the spring sunshine poured down on the large empty sandbox.

I pretended that I was tired and sat down on one of the swings. Yukiko followed suit and sat beside me.

"Yukiko, why don't you tell me what happened the day Uncle Tetsuo died? I'm ready for anything you might have to tell me."

I had given a lot of thought to where we should sit to talk. If we were both sitting on the swings, Yukiko wouldn't have to face me and I hoped this would help subdue any tension. Not only that, but I thought that the slight movent of the swing would help her relax.

"You said that you got home at four o'clock that day, but I saw Sachiko yesterday and she told me she left you at the bus stop a little before two. She said your teacher went to a meeting and you were let out of school early. You really got home about two o'clock, didn't you?"

Yukiko didn't answer, but the chains of her swing stopped squeaking and I found myself imagining her face as she squinted up at the sun.

"You got home around two o'clock. What happened then? Tell Mummy everything, just as it happened."

Yukiko still didn't say anything and I had to resist an impulse to hug her to me. Then Yukiko sighed and said in a small voice, "When I opened the door, I could hear Aunt Kimie and Uncle Tetsuo shouting at each other in the kitchen. It sounded like a terrible fight."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I swung toward Yukiko in suprise. "Why were they fighting?"

"I'm not sure. I think it was something about Uncle Tetsuo's father once having known Auntie's husband. He said that when Auntie's husband worked at the Town Hall he took a bribe from a building contractor, and when it became known he had a nervous breakdown and committed suicide by setting fire to the Town Hall. He said Auntie's husband was only a clerk, there had never been a chance of his becoming Assistant Mayor."

"_____"

"Auntie was livid. She called him a liar. I've never heard her shout like that before."

"What did you do?"

"I stood out in the hall for a while, but the fighting got worse so I went back outside and took the bus to Masako's house. Her mother works in the afternoon, too. I came home again about four o'clock and was met by one of the policemen, who told me that there had been an accident."

I gave a sigh of relief. Yukiko was innocent. But my relief was tempered with surprise. I couldn't understand how I could have made such a terrible mistake. I had never given it a thought before, but Tetsuo had told me that he came from a city in Nagano Prefecture and Kimie had lived in Nagano Prefecture until her husband's death fifteen years ago. Although I didn't know exactly which town either of them lived in, there was nothing to say it wasn't the same one. And if that was so, her husband would have been the right age to have known Tetsuo's father.

That day Tetsuo would have come down for breakfast and, true to form, Kimie would have entertained him with talk of her husband. However, Tetsuo had heard all about her husband from his father and known it was all lies. Far from being the next Assistant Mayor, he had been only a clerk, who, when he was about to be caught for having accepted a bribe, had set fire to the Town Hall and committed suicide.

He had probably only mentioned it as a joke at first, but it's not surprising that Kimie flew into a rage. There would seem to be little doubt that Tetsuo's version was the true one—he would have no need to annoy Kimie for no reason. Kimie would also have known the truth of what he said, but she would have wanted to protect the legend of her husband the hero since, through it, she felt, she had become someone to be respected.

Not knowing that they had been overheard by Yukiko, Kimie

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

later must have pushed him down the stairs. It's not likely that she had meant to kill him, but she had been overcome with rage and pushed him without thinking.

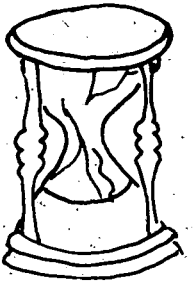
But there was no proof. Maybe it was all just a figment of my imagination. It had never occurred to me before, but the fact that there is no proof can be a good thing.

"Why didn't you tell me this before? Why didn't you tell the policeman when he was investigating the accident?" I asked.

Yukiko looked away and started to swing again before answering. "If Auntie was arrested, she wouldn't be able to look after the house and you wouldn't be able to go to the shop."

When we arrived home, Kimie was vacuuming the stairs. "Welcome home," she called from the stairs in a voice much younger than her years, "the weather has cleared up at last, hasn't it?

"Since you had these rubber runners fitted on the stairs, it's so much easier to go up and down. But it reminds me of something my husband once said. When they put the same kind of runners on the stairs in the Town Hall, he said that although they stopped people from slipping, the girls had to be careful that their high heels didn't get caught on them. He was always thinking of other people first. When the Town Hall caught fire, he stayed until the very end."



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Heard any good mysteries lately?

Mysteries on tape

The most comprehensive collection ever.

Dercum Press announces the introduction of the Active Books mystery collection. Classic and contemporary mystery stories on tape.

Now you can chase spies while driving; grill suspects while cooking; jump crooks while jogging; and even identify the guilty with your eyes closed!

This collection numbering twenty-six volumes will be one of the most comprehensive anthologies of mystery and suspense stories ever produced. It will include Arthur Conan Doyle, Ellery Queen, Georges Simenon and other greats.

These stories are not adaptations, excerpts, or abridgements of the original texts. They are recordings of every word originally written, read by experienced readers from the performing arts.

The Secret of the Foxhunter

Please join us with the first book of the series, "The Secret of the Foxhunter, and other mysteries", by William LeQuex; an author of 19th century Britain who was so highly honored for his tales of mystery and espionage that many authorities consider him the equal of Arthur Conan Doyle.

Money back guarantee

We're so sure you'll love this collection, that we will make the following offer to charter subscribers:

Order "The Secret of the Foxhunter, and other mysteries", for only $11.95, and listen to this the first of the collection. If you are not completely satisfied, return it within 15 days for a complete refund and we will cancel your subscription immediately. Keep it and we will send you one volume per month with the same satisfaction guarantee.

Yes I would like to subscribe to the Active Books mystery series on cassette tape @ $11.95 per book. If I am not completely satisfied I can cancel my subscription automatically by returning the book within 15 days. EQ-1

NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY: STATE: ZIP:

Please charge my subscription to:

VISA: #_____ Exp. date: _____

MASTER CARD: #_____ Exp. date: _____

MAIL ORDERS TO: DERCUM PRESS, P.O. BOX 1425, WEST CHESTER, PA 19380
CREDIT CARD PHONE ORDERS: 1-800-345-8112
In Penna. call: 1-800-662-2444

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* Griswold story by

ISAAC ASIMOV

Shakespeare wrote, "I hope good luck lies in odd numbers." Samuel Johnson said, "Round numbers are always false." What does Griswold say . . . ?

UPSIDE DOWN

by ISAAC ASIMOV

When I walked into the sedate but dusty library of the Union Club and found Griswold sitting in his wingchair, nodding over his Scotch and soda, I will admit I was greatly relieved. He had been absent the previous week, and while a note delivered to us by the porter told us he was in Baltimore and therefore presumably safe, it was somehow not pleasant to be without him.

Baranov and Jennings seemed as relieved as I was.

I said, "Do either of you two know *why* he was in Baltimore?"

They both shook their heads.

Baranov said, "I'll tell you what he's going to say. He's going to say he went to Baltimore hot on the trail of some spy and he'll tell us the whole story."

Jennings screwed up his eyes. "No, I don't think so. My guess is that he'll say the Baltimore police department called him in to consult on a locked-room murder—and he'll tell us the whole story."

"My guess," I said, "is that he'll say some foreign diplomat called him in to save the peace of the world. And he'll tell us the whole story."

Of course, Griswold's left eye opened at that. We all knew it would. He said, in his rumbling bass, "It may interest you idiots to know that I couldn't care less about spies, police, or diplomats. I went to Baltimore to visit a young niece and to spend a time of blissful quiet

© 1985 by Isaac Asimov.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with her and her family. Nothing more than that. However, something *did* happen and I'll tell you the whole story."

He ignored the chorus of groans.

The trouble with visiting my young niece (said Griswold), however pleasant and beloved, is that she has a young husband and two very young children, a boy and a girl, and every one of them treats me as though I'm an ancient and terribly fragile piece of china who must be cared for. For a day or so it is pleasant to be waited on and to have shawls wrapped around me and anxious questions as to the state of my health poured down upon me. After a while, though, they start removing the drinks from my hands and talking nonsense about high blood-pressure and cirrhosis of the liver and, in general, making themselves altogether impossible in the most loving conceivable way.

The second evening, therefore, I invented a piece of business that was going to take me out of the house and firmly refused to let them drive me anywhere. I would take a taxi, I said, and promised faithfully I would not go to any bars.

I am, of course, a man of my word, so I had the taxi take me to Baltimore's newest hotel where there just happened to be a place where I could buy a Scotch and soda. I forget what it was called but it was *not* called a bar.

I sat there, slowly slipping at my drink, feeling peace suffuse me, and deciding that I could manage one more day with my niece, of whom I am really very fond, when I became aware of a red-haired gentleman alone at the next table—tall, thin, well dressed, tapping his foot and casting quick glances at me as though he was anxious to talk to me but for some reason hesitated.

I smiled and nodded at him, curious as to what it was all about. If he intended to work a con on an innocent old gentleman, I was anxious to have him try. It would be good exercise for me.

He came over at once and sat down opposite me. "Pardon me," he said, turning red, "but I hope you won't mind an impertinent question. Do you have a room at this hotel?"

"No," I said, "but pretend I do. Why do you ask?"

He gritted his teeth. "Because if you *did* have and if it had two beds, I would have offered to pay you the full price of the room in advance if you'd let me share it with you for the night."

"Is this hotel filled up?"

"Yes, and so is every other hotel I've called. This is a convention

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

week in Baltimore and I can't get a room anywhere. I've got a heavy day tomorrow and I've got to get some sleep."

"I'm terribly sorry," I said, "but there's nothing I can do." I continued to be curious as to what he had up his sleeve.

He said, "The exasperating thing is I've got a perfectly good room right here in this hotel and I can't find it."

I was more interested than ever, because it began to look like a brand-new scam I'd never come across before. I wasn't going to let go. I said, "I don't see how that can be. Can you explain?"

"I have a friend here in Baltimore," he said.

I nodded and sipped at my drink. "Congratulations."

"He took a room here in order to be with a young woman, if you know what I mean."

"Oddly enough, I do."

"And she stood him up. He was furious. But since I needed a room and he suddenly didn't, he gave me the key."

"And you lost the key."

"No. I have it right here." He tapped his shirt pocket.

"Then what's your problem? The key has the room number on it. Go use it."

"No, it doesn't. There's no room number on the key. I'm the victim of high-tech."

I registered puzzlement. It was easy. I didn't know what he was talking about.

He fetched out a strip of plastic about one inch by two from his shirt pocket. He said, "This is the key. A piece of plastic. You stick it in a slot in the knob of the door of your room, press it down, turn the knob in either direction, and the door opens. If you don't put the plastic in the slot or if you put the plastic in the wrong doorknob, the knob just turns uselessly."

"And you mean to say it doesn't give the room number on that thing?"

"No. Look for yourself. There's a room combination impressed on it magnetically for whatever room you're assigned. When you check out, the card is cleared."

"How do you find out your room number when the card is given you?"

"They give you a second card with your room number on it."

"And where is that?"

"My friend has it—I think."

"You think?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The redhead took a deep breath. "It's hard to explain. You've got to understand my friend was *very* annoyed. He's not the kind who gets stood up and he wasn't really himself. He was trembling with rage and mortification when he gave me this card. He showed me the other card and said, 'This is the room number. Just don't turn it upside down.' And then he stalked off, forgetting to give it to me."

"Did you see the number on the card?"

"No."

"Call him at home and ask him."

"I tried. No one answers. God knows where he is."

"Go to the desk," I said. "Tell them you have to locate your friend and ask for his room number."

He looked exasperated. "You know better than that. The man at the desk won't give it. He'll just ring his room and no one will answer and he'll ask me to leave a message."

"Part with a twenty-dollar bill if he'll give you the room number. Wait till there's no one but the two of you when you offer the business transaction."

He thought about it. "Money is no problem. But I told you my friend was meeting a woman. He's married. Do you think he'd give his right name?"

"What does he usually give?"

"Who, my pal? He makes a fetish of giving unusual names. I remember one time, he told me, he used Thurston Beal MacClintock. He says names like that impress women. It could be anything now. Rumpelstiltskin, for all I know."

By now I had decided this wasn't some fancy scheme to trap me. He was beginning to convince me it was all real.

I said, "I suppose you could try every room in the place."

"Yes, I'm so desperate I've thought of it. The trouble is there are five floors in this place, and on each floor there are a hundred rooms—I've studied the floor plan. There's 100 to 199 on the first floor, 200 to 299 on the second, all the way to 500 to 599 on the fifth. You want me to try 500 rooms? Do you know how long it would take?"

I said, "You might just hit the right key on the fifth or sixth try."

"It's infinitely more likely I'd be reported on the fifth or sixth try and be picked up and held for the police in order to prove I'm not a burglar. That's all I need. If I miss tomorrow's conference because I'm in jail, regardless of how innocent I am, I can kiss my career goodbye."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Things are that sensitive, are they?"

"Oh, yes."

He looked at me with a kind of feverish despair. "Promotion depends on how I do tomorrow. If I don't make it this time, I'll never make it at all. If I have to sit here all night, or on a park bench—and don't get mugged—and come in with wrinkled clothes and a stubble, I won't make it. And if I'm jailed or even held for questioning and miss the meeting altogether, the mind boggles."

I frowned.

"Well, then," I said, "how would you like to try two rooms? Just two. I'll go with you and lend it respectability."

"What do you mean two rooms?"

"Exactly what I said. We'll try two rooms. I think one of them will be yours. And if I'm wrong and neither one is, you'll be no worse off than you are right now."

He looked at me as though he thought me out of my mind, but it was a measure of his desperation, I suppose, that he said, "All right. Let's try it."

And actually, we were lucky. It was a 50–50 chance and we won. The first room we tried was the right one. I suppose he slept and I suppose he got his promotion, but I don't really know. The only crucial point for me was that I found him his room.

"Well," Jennings said, "What did you use to find it for him? Black magic?"

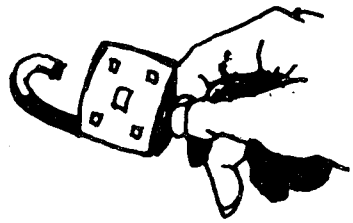
"Mere logic," said Griswold, "which would be black magic to you, I suppose. When his friend was about to give him the ticket with the room number on it he said, 'Just don't turn it upside down.' Presumably it would mislead him if he did. Well, the first digit had to be one, two, three, four, or five since there were only five floors. But if it were two, three, four, or five and you held it upside down, you'd see at once it was upside down. If the first digit was one, it would still be one upside down. If it's more than a simple vertical stroke, of course, you'd be able to tell if you really looked, but you'd miss it at a hasty glance.

"The last digit could be anything from zero to nine, but anything over five would be useless because turned upside down the last digit becomes the first digit, which can only be one to five. And that again means only one, because that's the only digit that would still look right side up if it were upside down. So the room number was therefore one-something-one. We needed only the middle digit.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The middle digit could be anything from zero to nine, but only zero, one, six, eight, and nine look all right upside down. If it were zero, one, or eight you would have 101, 111, or 181, and those are useless because if you hold them upside down they look just the same, it doesn't matter whether they are right side up or upside down.

"That left 161 and 191. If 161 is upside down it becomes 191 and if 191 is upside down it becomes 161. Those were the only two numbers that could possibly lead to confusion if the ticket was held upside down. We tried 161 first and it was right."



DETECTIVERSE

FOR OPENERS

by MARK GRENIER

Said an amateur burglar named Nick
To a pro who had learned every trick,
"Should I carry a gun—
Or a blackjack to stun?"
Said the veteran, "Son, take your pick."

© 1985 by Mark Grenier.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* Ganelon story by

JAMES POWELL

According to Thirteenth Century legend, Albertus Magnus—saint, philosopher, and scientist—created a mechanical man out of brass, animating it through his astrological skills and the proper conjunction of the planets. He was assisted in this venture by St. Thomas Aquinas, who had come to Cologne to study under him. This mechanical marvel was set to work as a kind of domestic servant, duties that it performed in an unhurried though excellent manner. But the Brass Man's incessant chatter so distracted Aquinas from his philosophical meditations that he lured the machine down into the cellar and bricked it up in an alcove . . .

THE BRASS MAN

by JAMES POWELL

The American painter James Whistler once described the color mauve as pink trying to be purple. Ambrose Ganelon, son of the founder of the Ganelon Agency, recalled this remark as he looked down at the stain alongside his middle finger. In San Sebastiano, mauve meant the color of official ink. It was the Principality's equivalent of red tape, a combination of the blue and pink of the little country's bicolored flag, which in turn represented humanity—man and woman. Ganelon handed back the cross-nibbed pen and picked up his cane.

The dusty old veteran, wearing the ribbon of the Sardinian War Medal on his museum-guard uniform, blotted Ganelon's signature with care. Then he passed the book to his younger colleague seated at his side, who glanced up at the clock on the vestibule wall and jotted down the time beside the detective's name. It was 9:14 on a

© 1985 by James Powell.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Friday evening. The year was 1905. The two policemen sitting on the bench beneath the clock could count themselves lucky to have an indoor assignment and congenial guard company, for outside the moon was hard and cold and the wind chill—exceptional weather for a Mediterranean October.

As he passed into the gloom of the museum proper, Ganelon stripped off his overcoat to reveal impeccably cut evening dress, including a fashionable white waistcoat which he had been the first to champion in the Principality. But almost at once his pace slackened, for this time his old friend, the expatriate American Simon Lovage, would not be waiting for him in his fourth-floor office. Ganelon had just visited the museum director's murdered body in the morgue.

Under Lovage's direction, the museum had accumulated the finest collection of mechanical apparatus of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries in Europe. Ganelon paused at a case displaying the Danzig Astrolabe, whose discovery by Lovage had astonished learned Europe. Then he crossed over to the collection of dog-driven fireplace spits, the inspiration for Lovage's two-volume history, which had amazed historians as much as it had outraged animal lovers.

The museum's Grand Staircase had been converted into a chronology of European armor. On every other step along the onyx balustrades stood an iron man of war. Ganelon took a deep breath before starting upward. In one of his gothic moments, the detective's father had set up a suit of beaked armor on the second-floor landing of their house on the rue Blondin, a formidable presence for a little boy to pass beneath on a dark staircase on his way to a darker bedroom. A visit to Lovage had always been like a month of bedtimes.

More armor lurked in the shadows at the top of the stairs, and display cases of swords, battle-axes, and maces. A dark hallway led to other galleries on the floor. Ganelon was about to continue his upward climb when he thought he heard the sound of a slow metal step retreating down the hallway, each tread unnaturally like the one before. Quickly, he touched a switch on his cane. The ivory head glowed with light provided by a galvanic battery in the shaft. When the bugs were worked out, Ganelon hoped to market this handy detective's tool as a device for hailing cabs at night.

Armed with light and straining his ears, he walked down the hallway. But the sound had disappeared. Or, considering the matter at hand, it might all have been his imagination. Ganelon stood and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

listened for a moment before retracing his steps. As he did, he noticed a sedan chair with a door ajar near the entrance to the Transportation gallery. On investigation, he discovered that someone had taken up light housekeeping inside. There was a small alcohol stove, a brown teapot, a mug and spoon, a can of condensed milk, a small bag of sugar, a silver-foil quarter-pound packet of Pride of Farthest Serendip tea, a can of Highland Lassie shortbread biscuits, and a small leather grip. Everything but the tea kettle.

Ganelon turned off his cane and continued on his way to the third floor, where he passed through the funereal Egyptian collection and the deep silence of the music-box gallery, at the end of which a narrow staircase led up to the administrative offices and the strongroom where earlier that evening Lovage's body had been found, the forehead crushed in by a blunt metal instrument.

Though the police had not yet charged him, Paul Boulanger, the museum's assistant director, was their principal suspect in the murder. Ganelon had never cared for Boulanger. He found the young man haughty without achievement, ambitious without high purpose. The detective placed him among that growing breed who must put themselves in the forefront of every endeavor, men who would gladly march the world to hell if only it would let them lead the way.

Light from the outer-office door lay across the dark hallway. Ganelon entered. The director's office was closed and dark. Through the other open door Ganelon could see the fair-haired Boulanger writing with a silver pencil at his desk, his handsome face drawn and pale. A knock on the doorjamb made him start with fearful eyes and reach for a desk drawer. Then he saw who it was and rose to take the detective's hand. "My father-in-law said he would speak to you," said Boulanger, adding with a nod at Ganelon's evening dress. "Do we presume?"

"No, I've been in Baron St. Fiacre's debt too long," said Ganelon. In 1874 the detective's father moved heaven and earth to have his seventeen-year-old son left behind when the blue-cloaked Tripoline Lancers embarked for the hostilities in the Levant. But St. Fiacre, then Minister for War, listened to a young ensign's plea and delayed signing the "only child" disability order until the troop ship was at sea.

"I'll begin at the beginning, then," said Boulanger, moving a bit too easily from one who fears he presumes to one who is collecting a long overdue debt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"First the scene of the crime," insisted Ganelon, determined to thwart the young man's need to take charge. As they reached the hall he added, "And what's this about your seeing the Brass Man?"

According to Thirteenth Century legend, Albertus Magnus—saint, philosopher, and scientist—created a mechanical man out of brass, animating it through his astrological skills and the proper conjunction of the planets. He was assisted in this venture by St. Thomas Aquinas, who had come to Cologne to study under him. This mechanical marvel was set to work as a kind of domestic servant, duties that it performed in an unhurried though excellent manner. But the Brass Man's incessant chatter so distracted Aquinas from his philosophical meditations that he lured the machine down into the cellar and bricked it up in an alcove. Some said that five hundred years later workmen excavating for an addition to the Mittelbrau brewery discovered and carried off the Brass Man, which they mistook for a valuable suit of ancient armor.

"I was always the first to scoff at the Brass Man," admitted Boulanger soberly. "The ultimate machine as Lovage called it. I was wrong." They had reached the strongroom door at the end of the hall. The assistant director removed a key from his watchchain. Ganelon felt an icy draft, but before he could locate its source Boulanger unlocked the steel door.

The interior of the strongroom was lined on three sides with a hundred or so small doors of various sizes, each with its own lock and number. On the floor stood a sturdy wooden crate half filled with excelsior. "I found Lovage there with his tools scattered around him," said Boulanger, pointing to the foot of the crate.

Ganelon went down on one knee and poked among the excelsior.

"Do you know Max Jurgen?" asked Boulanger.

Ganelon nodded and continued his examination of the crate. Jurgen was one of those shadowy individuals, half adventurer, half rogue, who lurk on the edge of art and of the law.

"He was the one who found the Brass Man and restored it to working order," said Boulanger. "He wanted Lovage to authenticate his discovery. He said he had a customer ready to pay a king's ransom for it. Of course, Lovage wanted us to make an offer, too. 'Don't set your heart on it,' I warned him while he was instructing Sabatini, our technical man, on the trip to Prague to pack up the machine. 'I've sweated blood building up the acquisition fund. I won't stand by and watch it squandered in one fell swoop. I won't back you up with the trustees this time.' Sabatini gave me a wink and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a grin. He has his devious side. He sees me as the coming man and wants to be in my good graces. Personally, I find his wardrobe too carefully put together for a gentleman. He buys his ties at Samuel's."

Ganelon winced inwardly. He bought his ties at the same expensive shop.

"The crate was delivered late this afternoon," said Boulanger, "right after Lovage left by train to lecture on medieval winches and windlasses before the Zurich Academy. I opened the crate to make sure it had arrived in one piece. The Brass Man resembled a suit of Teutonic armor with a bucketlike helmet cut with a large cross for eye slits. I had the guards carry it into the strongroom.

"Around six o'clock, Lovage returned. An avalanche had blocked the rail lines on the other side of the Simplon. He'd had to wire Zurich his regrets. His eyes lit up when he heard the Brass Man had arrived. 'At least I'll see what makes it tick,' he said, and off he went with his toolbox."

Ganelon got to his feet. In answer to Boulanger's inquiring look he said, "Behind the odor of machine oil I detect a salami and a camembert cheese no longer at its prime."

The young man raised a puzzled eyebrow before continuing his story. "A few minutes later I decided to have a peek inside the Brass Man myself. That's when I found Lovage dead. As I bent over him, I realized someone was behind me standing back of the door. Pretending to recoil in horror from the bloody scene, I moved slowly backward. Then I turned and bolted out into the hall. That's when I saw the Brass Man, its arm upraised to strike me down. I slammed the door behind me. As the lock clicked shut, I heard metal thud on the other side.

"The police were pounding up the stairs almost before I put down the telephone receiver. They stood with pistols drawn as I unlocked the strongroom door. Lovage was where I'd left him but the Brass Man was gone!

"Then I realized my mistake. Lovage and I both carried a master key that opens every interior door in the museum. When the police searched Lovage, the master key was gone. I told them the Brass Man had taken it to unlock the door from the inside. I don't think the police believed me. Yet I wasn't arrested."

"Baron St. Fiacre's son-in-law has certain privileges," said Ganelon. "Count on being arrested if we haven't settled this business by midnight."

They returned to Boulanger's office, where the grim assistant

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

director produced a brandy bottle. "Ah, another thing," he announced, as he poured two stiff drinks, "just before you arrived Max Jurgen called from the railroad station. He insisted no one touch the Brass Man until he got here."

"The plot thickens," mused Ganelon. Then, staring into his glass, he asked, "Why are you working on a Friday evening? Hardly gentleman's hours."

"The Star of Amsterdam exhibit," said Boulanger. "The first time the diamond's been shown outside the Netherlands. A private showing Tuesday followed by the public opening. There are guest lists, refreshments to be arranged, paragraphs for the newspapers, and overseeing Sabatini's work on the exhibition room downstairs."

"Across the hall from the Transportation gallery?"

"That's it," said Boulanger. "And here's another reason why Lovage and I disagreed, Mr. Ganelon. I believe people want to see the stuff of dreams: large precious stones and royal crowns. Not old machinery. Not a collection of antique toasting forks, no matter how complete, or a medieval bathing machine, no matter how rare."

A quick step sounded in the hall and Max Jurgen came into the office with the smell of the cold night still clinging to his overcoat. A bald-headed man with protruding eyes and pronounced lips, he resembled a shrewd frog, though at that moment a very anxious one. As the man switched his hat from one hand to the other to shake Ganelon's hand, the detective noted how his cold, dead-white fingers added to the amphibian impression.

"Has anything happened?" asked the worried Jurgen. "The police downstairs—" When Boulanger explained the circumstances of Lovage's death, the new arrival sagged. "My fault," he said, shaking his head remorsefully. "I should never have let Sabatini get his hands on the key."

"What key?" demanded Ganelon.

"This one," said Jurgen, pulling out a large-barrel key and then pocketing it again. He began pacing nervously back and forth on the carpet. Boulanger sat down behind his desk while Ganelon perched on one of its corners, swinging his cane.

"The Brass Man is a sophisticated clockwork mechanism," explained Jurgen. "Originally, there was a permanent key in the small of the thing's back, enabling it to wind itself up. In my reconstruction I made the key removable to give me a measure of control over the contraption. And my foresight saved my life." He paused like someone who fears he has begun a story at the wrong end.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He gulped down the brandy Boulanger handed him before continuing. "I found the first pieces of the Brass Man in an old trunk in an antiquary shop in Cologne. From there a long and twisted trail led me to all the major parts. Albertus Magnus' writings, particularly *De Alchimia*, aided my reconstruction of the machine. Only the ethical flywheel defied me, for it had warped and was corroded through in several places. Albertus Magnus describes this part as a facsimile of the soul. Without it the Brass Man was just a clumsy clockwork thing. Well, I wanted more than that.

"One day I decided to give it a quarter turn with the damaged flywheel in place. Thank God I had the wit to keep the key in my hand. A cold and calculating light flickered in the eye slit for an instant, then the machine seized me by the throat with one hand while the other grabbed for the key.

"In our struggle the key flew across the room. With a hiss so evil my heart turned to stone, the Brass Man threw me to the floor and started after it. Halfway across the room it slowed, lurched to a stop, and, as though making a superhuman effort, started again. 'I must,' it hissed. 'I must.' Then it took two more steps, faltered, and toppled over onto the floor." Jurgen turned pale. He spun around and looked out through the outer office to the dark hallway. "Listen," he whispered, running a nervous finger around inside his old-fashioned collar.

"I don't hear anything," said Boulanger.

Ganelon didn't look up from tracing arabesques on the carpet with the tip of his cane.

After a moment of listening in the silence, Jurgen licked his lips and continued. "But how could I possess a speaking mechanism which had served Albertus Magnus and Aquinas hundreds of years ago and not communicate with it?" he asked. "So I secured the Brass Man to my workbench with stout straps. When I turned the key, the Brass Man hurled itself against its bonds but they held. Then the thing spoke to me in a high and mighty manner, describing in detail what it would do to me and mine if it had to release itself. The words were merciless and homicidal. Then abruptly they grew gentle and perplexed. 'Please, dear priest,' it said, 'do not put that last brick in place. You say I will awake in another time, one filled with creatures such as I where my chatter will be lost in the racket of everyday. Yet I fear the dark."

"Amazing," said Ganelon as Boulanger refilled the glasses.

Jurgen drained the brandy and continued. "Then the voice turned

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hard and cruel. 'Sleep. You promised sleep, lying priest. How many years did it take sleep to come? How many thousand times did I say the prayers and sing the hymns you taught me? And when my joints thickened, I sat motionless, speaking to the darkness, knowing that was not what I was made for. At last my chatter ceased, for I had found something dark and deep to think on. My revenge. What had been done to me I would do to all humankind. I would let every man corrode in darkness, too, until his maker chose to bring him back to life!'

"So spoke the Brass Man. Still, when your Mr. Sabatini arrived I couldn't resist giving him a little demonstration, because—"

"Because you really didn't have any wealthy buyer," suggested Ganelon.

Jurgen acknowledged this with a bow. "I'm not getting any younger. The doctors say I have a bad heart. I'd invested everything I had in finding and reconstructing the Brass Man, hoping to make enough to retire. But I ended up with a homicidal machine.

"I hoped Lovage'd buy the Brass Man and let me recoup my investment. If anyone could repair the ethical flywheel, he could. Well, in any event, when I wound up the Brass Man for Sabatini, it lay there gentle as a lamb. 'Kind gentlemen,' it purred, 'if wise priests were my father, the very earth itself was my mother. From her ores was I cast.

" 'Nor did my mother abandon me across the dark centuries. She often came with lullabies to lure sleep. Her songs told of buried treasures, of misers' hoards and robbers' caches long forgotten, of rich mines wrongfully abandoned and the secret gold of kings long dead.' Here the Brass Man turned its head to look Sabatini right in the eyes. 'I would make the one who frees me rich beyond all imagining,' it said. Then it wound down.

"Of course I explained to Sabatini the machine's darker side," said Jurgen, "and why I could not let the key out of my possession. And I drew a few sketches for Lovage—ideas for the repair of the ethical flywheel. Then I was called away."

Jurgen stopped his pacing and looked at them with sad eyes. "I must have left the key on my desk," he said. "Yesterday as I prepared for my trip here I returned to my sketch pad. There on the top sheet I found the impression of those drawings I'd given Sabatini to bring on ahead of me. Alongside them was the impression of another drawing—the outline of the key."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You're saying Sabatini had a duplicate wind-up key made?" asked Boulanger.

Jurgen nodded. "If he's used it, he's a dead man for certain."

"But that means a homicidal machine's loose in the museum!" exclaimed Boulanger in a horrified voice. "One with a master key that can open any lock!"

Ganelon glanced up from the carpet. "That's quite a stylish hat, Mr. Jurgen," he said. "May I ask where you got it?"

Jurgen gave Ganelon a disappointed look and handed over the hat so the detective could see for himself. Then he turned his attention to Boulanger. "Even if we found the damn thing there are only two ways we could stop it," he said. "First, sneak up from behind, snatch out the key, and throw it down a grating or something."

"But wouldn't that mean certain death?" asked Boulanger. "Wouldn't the Brass Man kill whoever did that on the spot?" He shook his head. "What's the other way?"

"A crack shot might dislodge the ethical flywheel located right inside the eye slit," said Jurgen as Ganelon handed back his hat.

"I'm considered something of a marksman," admitted Boulanger, taking a pistol from a desk drawer.

"And Lovage used to keep a pistol," said Ganelon. "While I find it, why don't you call downstairs and see if Sabatini has signed out."

The detective left them and went over to the late director's office. He had no trouble locating the pistol in a desk drawer. But as he did so he noted that the uppermost letter beneath the bronze-dragon paperweight on the desk bore the polychrome letterhead of the Pillars of Hercules Insurance Company of London and proclaimed in capitals: RE THE STAR OF AMSTERDAM SECURITY.

"Dear Simon," the letter began, "I know this matter is the province of your assistant and that I should be writing to him. Please excuse the whim of an old man, but quite frankly I find this modern generation as cold and humorless as mechanical fish. It seems to me that in our day we accomplished considerably more with infinitely less show of doing it. But enough of that. All this is to introduce you to the bearer, Mr. Amos Raskin of our office. Be deceived neither by his appearance nor his methods. He is among our top operatives and has recently learned that an attempt will be made on the Star of Amsterdam. I am sure you will allow him to look into your security procedures and provide whatever assistance he might require." Here

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the writer drifted off into personal ancedote. Ganelon set the letter down and thought for a moment.

When he returned to the others, Boulanger was hanging up the telephone. "The guards in the vestibule say Sabatini hasn't signed out," said the assistant director. "Of course, he might have left before closing time. I doubt it, though. We're all working late because of the Star of Amsterdam exhibit."

"The Star of Amsterdam?" asked Jurgen. "You mean it's on display here?"

"Actually, it's locked in the strongroom until the exhibit opens," said Boulanger.

Jurgen furrowed his brow. When Ganelon handed him Lovage's pistol, he tried to give it back. "I've never used one of those things," he insisted. "You keep it."

Ganelon refused. "Never liked the blasting things myself," he said. "Even in my Lancer days I found a sidearm only pulls one's uniform out of shape. The blade in my cane will do nicely for me. Through the eye slit, you say?"

Jurgen nodded. "But look," he said, "this Star of Amsterdam business has got me thinking. Maybe the Brass Man has blinded us to a more obvious possibility." He paused and looked at Ganelon. When the detective returned his gaze without speaking, Jurgen continued, "Look, suppose it's Sabatini. In the wagon bringing the Brass Man from the railroad station, he removes the ethical flywheel. Now he could wind up the thing without any danger to himself, lead it out of the crate and into the hands of some accomplice. Then he could take its place dressed in a suit of armor. He'd have the weekend to rifle the strongroom. Then he'd pop back into the crate. Bright and early Monday morning you'd get a telegram from his accomplice signed with my name requesting the immediate return of the Brass Man on some excuse or other."

"That would explain your salami and camembert," said Boulanger to Ganelon.

"But Lovage returned unexpectedly and Sabatini tried to knock him out," continued Jurgen. "He hit him wrong and Lovage died. A minute later, Boulanger here blundered in and escaped. Sabatini let himself out of the strongroom. He heard Boulanger calling the police and fled down into the museum. Now here's the question we have to ask ourselves: where would he go to hide?"

"I know the perfect place," said Boulanger. "The armor collection."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The very place," agreed Jurgen.

The young guard Boulanger summoned arrived in the doorway pale-faced and with pistol drawn. "We're okay in the vestibule, sir," he said. "But the other lights are out. I came all the way up in the dark."

"Perhaps our quarry wants to make things as difficult for us as he can," suggested Ganelon.

They stationed the guard in front of the strongroom. "If anyone tries to get in here, Gaston, shoot to kill," ordered Boulanger.

As the other two started toward the stairwell, Ganelon stopped. "Where's my draft gone to?" he asked himself out loud. He opened a door across from the strongroom. The air in the janitor's closet was chilly but still, its small window closed but unlatched. When Ganelon pushed it, the frame swung out into a cold black air shaft. The detective put his head out the window and looked up and down. Certainly nothing could have escaped from the museum that way.

Ganelon joined the other two at the top of the stairs. Illuminating his cane, he led them down the dark flight to the moonlit gloom and ominous silence of the music-box gallery.

"Listen," whispered Jurgen, "I hear something."

"I don't," insisted Boulanger again. Nor did Ganelon.

They continued on through the gallery to the Egyptian exhibit. Here, too, the moonlight dressed the upright sarcophagi and hawk-, ram-, and jackal-headed gods with menace. "This is all hell on my nerves," said Jurgen unsteadily. "I'm shaking like a leaf."

"Then watch where you point your pistol," warned Ganelon.

Jurgen stopped dead in his tracks. "Listen," he said again. "A hiss. The Brass Man hissed at me like that when it had me by the throat!"

"It's the steam heat," insisted Boulanger halfheartedly. "I told the janitor to get the furnace in working order. This cold snap could last into next week."

Ganelon noticed how Jurgen held back. But the man didn't want to be left alone, either, and as soon as the darkness folded in about him he hurried forward into the light again. "Generations will curse Sabatini's name if he's let that monster loose on the world," he muttered.

They reached the top of the next flight of steps. The armor collection and the Grand Staircase lay below them. Brass men lurked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in every shadow. Steel blades glinted in the moonlight on every side. Ganelon led the way, with Boulanger close behind and Jurgen hanging back more fearfully at every step. Halfway down the stairs, a clatter of metal sounded in the darkness below them. All three froze where they were as though this was what they'd been waiting to hear. As the echo died away, a slow metal footstep approached beyond the light of Ganelon's cane.

Jurgen started a low fearful moan. A dark shape loomed on the fringe of the light. "Shoot, Boulanger!" shouted Jurgen. "For the sake of heaven, shoot!"

But Ganelon's cane made an arc of light and deftly knocked the pistol from Boulanger's hand. Behind him the detective heard Jurgen's firing-pin snap on an empty chamber and the man's despairing curse. Turning back, Ganelon said, "I couldn't really allow you to shoot Mr. Amos Raskin here. So I was obliged to unload Lovage's pistol." He turned to the newcomer, who had now emerged completely into the light—a tall man in a tweed cap, soft collar, and tie with a steaming mug of tea clasped in one hand. "You are Mr. Raskin, I take it."

"That is my name, sir," said the man. "Though you have an advantage on me there."

When he had introduced himself and his companions Ganelon said, "You've taken up temporary residence in one of the sedan chairs, I believe, Mr. Raskin. When I dropped by earlier you'd gone to fill your tea kettle. If I may, is the metal brace on your leg the result of some childhood illness?"

"Osteomyelitis, sir," said Raskin. "Though it's never given Pillars of Hercules cause for complaint. I—" Here the man stopped. He set his mug of tea on the floor, and with a polite nod to Ganelon he raised the detective's cane so he could see Jurgen's face more clearly. "Here, now, sir," he said. "You may know this individual as Jurgen. But he's Otto Winkler to me."

"And you're a lying double-crosser called Ironshank George," growled Jurgen.

Taking a good grip on the lapel of Jurgen's overcoat with one hand, Raskin used the other to search the man's pockets.

"Pillars and all the insurance companies buy back stolen goods," he said. "Like this one," he added, triumphantly displaying the Star of Amsterdam diamond. "But Winkler and the other big thieves always used go-betweens. So Pillars set myself up as a go-between.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We wanted to find out whom we were dealing with and pass the information on to the authorities. Winning the confidence of the underworld was no vacation and I didn't do it overnight. But bit by bit my supposed knack for making a better bargain began to attract the bigger clients like Winkler here. One day he wondered out loud what I thought he could get for the return of the Star of Amsterdam. He said he needed to know because it would cost him a bundle to set up the theft. Pillars alerted the police, but Winkler slipped through their fingers. So Pillars sent me here. I spoke to your Mr. Lovage this morning and he gave me permission to spend the weekend inside the museum checking on security."

Jurgen craned forward to thrust his face into Ganelon's. "You saw through my little story from the beginning, didn't you?" he demanded angrily. "You were just leading me on."

"You put on an extraordinary performance," said Ganelon. "But there was no ink on your fingers from that damnable vestibule pen. So you hadn't signed in. That certainly set me thinking. And I found it hard to reconcile your out-of-date collar with your up-to-date hat, one you never wore because it was several sizes too small, one that smelled of lavender hair pomade, something that is hardly an element of a bald man's toilet. So it was you in the crate, not the fashionable Sabatini. The hat and coat were his. You held them out the window in the janitor's closet to make them reek of the cold night."

"Well, what would you have done in my shoes?" demanded Jurgen. "Hiding here in the damn armor collection, I realized I'd be the police's logical suspect when they found the empty crate. And when I saw Ironshank George here walk by like he owned the place it didn't take me too long to realize which side of the law he was on and how desperate my situation was with him around to finger me. I needed a plan. Then a few minutes later Sabatini came out of the exhibition room dressed for the street."

"You killed him for his hat and coat?" demanded Boulanger angrily.

"Let's say we swapped outfits," said Jurgen. "Look, I knew the police weren't going to believe mechanical killers, ethical flywheels, or talking machines for long." He smiled, remembering Boulanger's credulity. "I knew that sooner or later I'd need a flesh-and-blood suspect."

"Your plan was ingeniously conceived on the spur of the moment and executed with daring," acknowledged Ganelon. "It was as spell-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

binding to watch as a high-wire act on a windy day." Here the detective bent over to pick up something from the floor. It was the large key Jurgen had shown them. "I don't suppose you had much trouble finding a prop like this in a museum that specializes in machinery. And just now you threw it from the staircase to lure Mr. Raskin from his den. And what a job you did on Mr. Boulanger! You almost had him shoot Mr. Raskin for you. Well, no one is so easily led as one who always wants to go first. I—" Here the light in Ganelon's cane fluttered and went out. "Damn," said the detective. There was a commotion in the darkness as he pounded the tip of the cane on the floor.

By the time the light came on again it revealed Raskin holding an empty overcoat by a lapel and Boulanger sitting on the floor rubbing his jaw. Jurgen was halfway down the Grand Staircase, running full tilt. In a desperate gamble, Ganelon threw himself against the first suit of armor at the top of the stairs, toppling it over onto the next two steps below. One after another the armor went down like a row of dominos.

The falling armor caught up with the fleeing Jurgen and fell parallel with him for a moment and then began to pass him as he ran. "Damn," said Ganelon again.

Then inexplicibly, as though balanced other than the rest, a suit of Teutonic armor fell sideways out of the tumbling line and landed on top of Jurgen. The murderer gave a cry of sudden fear. The metal thing carried him off his feet. They rolled loudly downward, locked in a close embrace.

Ganelon hurried to the bottom of the steps and bent over Jurgen's body. There were no visible injuries, but the man was quite dead. Then the detective turned to the suit of armor and removed the bucketlike helmet. The head of the corpse inside was caked with old blood and bore an elegant mustache.

"Sabatini," said Boulanger, arriving at the bottom with Raskin close behind.

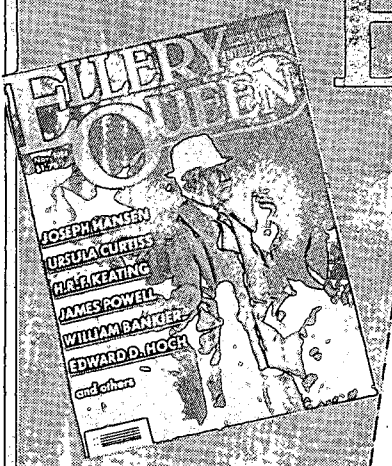
"And is he dead, too?" asked Raskin, nodding at Jurgen. "I didn't think the fall as bad as that."

"I suspect he was dead before he hit bottom," said Ganelon. "No doubt the coroner will blame his heart. A figment of Jurgen's imagination suddenly sprang to life back there on the staircase. It must have been quite a shock. But hardly the first time a monster has destroyed its creator."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MYSTERY READERS...
PLAY THE TRUMP CARD WITH

ELLERY QUEEN
THE WORLD'S LEADING MYSTERY MAGAZINE



CONSULT Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine every month and UNCOVER the world of daring crimes, challenging intrigues, and first-class detection.

SNARE villains, spies and counterspies from the clues expertly tucked between the action-packed pages of the world's leading mystery magazine.

In each issue a newsletter reports and reviews the latest mystery events in TV, movies and books.

And **THERE IS MORE!**

Exclusive point-blank interviews with top-ranking crime writers like John Mortimer, Robert B. Parker and Nedra Tyre.

MAKE YOUR BEST MOVE by mailing the attached coupon today, and get 12 entertaining issues for the unbeatable price of $15.97.

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
P.O. BOX 1930 · MARION OH · 43305

Send me 12 issues of EQMM for ONLY $15.97! I save $8.03 off the $24.00 newsstand price.

☐ Bill me later
☐ Payment Enclosed

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

OR CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-247-2160 (In IOWA call 1-800-362-2860)

PLEASE ALLOW 6 TO 8 WEEKS FOR YOUR FIRST ISSUE

DQF5Q

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a special reprint by

EDWARD D. HOCH

The idea of reprinting this story, originally published in the August 1977 issue of EQMM under the pseudonym R. L. Stevens, was suggested by Retta Dillon of Washington, D.C. . . .

THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY

by EDWARD D. HOCH

Ragger was seated on a wood piling staring out through the evening mist at the calm beauty of New York harbor when he heard someone approaching. It could only have been Edith, but he felt his muscles tense nevertheless. He let one hand slide along his waist to the sandbag he carried on his belt, ready to spring to the attack if it should be a policeman or Pinkerton guard assigned to the pier area.

But it was Edith.

"This is a dangerous place at night," she cautioned. "Someone could rob you and toss your body into the water."

"I can take care of myself. I came down here for the view."

"What can you see in all this mist?"

"My girl, I can see a half million dollars."

"A half—"

"I am going to commit the crime of the century—a crime that will put my name in the history books alongside that of John Wilkes Booth."

"You mean you're going to shoot President Cleveland?"

Ragger chuckled at the idea. Cleveland had only been in office three months, since his inauguration on March 4, 1885. "He ain't even had time to make enemies yet, girl!"

© 1977 by R. L. Stevens.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, whatever you have in mind, you won't get into the history books unless you're caught."

"I'll write 'em from South America after it's all over and tell them who I am."

"South America? Can I go with you, Ragger?"

"'Course you can go with me! What do you think I'm telling you about it for?"

"When's all this going to happen?"

"In about ten days, give or take a day. I'm meeting tomorrow with some boys that are goin' to help me. There's lots of plannin' to be done."

"The crime of the century. What is it, Ragger?"

"You'll find out soon enough, my girl."

The following evening Ragger and Edith crossed the new bridge to the city of Brooklyn and met four men in a waterfront tavern, gathering in a private upstairs room where they wouldn't be disturbed. One of them, Andy Crews, had been a friend of Ragger's since their Navy days together. The other three were tough-looking seamen anxious to make a crooked dollar. Andy had had little trouble recruiting them for the job.

Ragger looked them over and asked, "What're your names?"

"Haskel," a rough-looking bald man answered.

"Peters." A young one, but already carrying the scars of battle on his face.

"Fernandez." This last from a dark-skinned Spaniard.

"Good. I'm Ragger and this is Edith, my woman. That's all you need to know about us. If the job is successful you'll be paid twenty-five-thousand dollars each." He could see their faces light up at the sum. It was as much as they'd normally make in many years.

"Who do we have to kill?" Haskel asked with a grin.

"With luck, nobody. We're going to be pirates. We're going to intercept a ship as she approaches the shore, board her, and remove her cargo."

"What is it—gold bullion?" the young one, Peters, asked.

"Something better than bullion. You'll know when the time comes and not before." He turned to Andy Crews. "What luck have you had with a boat?"

Andy shook his head. "Not good, Ragger. I've got one that can be handled by this small a crew, and it has a good strong winch on board. But have you figured out the timing on this operation?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Andy Crews was an educated man who worried about things like timing. Ragger often scoffed but usually followed his advice. "What about the timing?" he asked with a frown.

"There are two hundred and twenty large crates to be removed from the ship—correct?"

"That's right. That's the word I got from my man who'll be on board."

"Well, the boat I have for us could barely hold one hundred crates on its deck without capsizing. It would have to make two or more likely three trips to the ship—all while we held the crew captive. The thing would take days—just the unloading would take days! And while we went back and forth to shore you'd be virtually alone on the *Isère* with your prisoners."

It was the first time the name of the French ship had been mentioned. Ragger glanced at the three men but he saw at once that the name meant nothing to them. "All right," he said finally. "Any better suggestion?"

"Yes," Crews said. "Instead of my coming with you as originally planned, I could remain on shore. You'd have these three plus your man on board the *Isère* to seize the ship, while Edith held our cutter alongside. You know my fondness for pigeons. When the ship is secure, you could release a pigeon which would fly back to me here at the tavern as a signal."

"Are they trained for that?"

Andy Crews nodded. "I have some trained ones as good as any used during the war. When I receive the signal, I would then announce that the ship's cargo was being held for $500,000 ransom. If the money wasn't paid at once, we'd threaten to scuttle or blow up the *Isère*."

Ragger admitted it made sense. The transfer of the cargo had always bothered him, and this way it could be avoided. "All right," he decided. "It's agreed. But we'll be depending on you. How will you notify us that the ransom has been paid?"

"Your man on the *Isère* is to fire a rocket when the ship is in sight of Sandy Hook. I'll do the same. When the money is paid, I'll fire a rocket from Sandy Hook—and you can leave the ship."

"With the Revenue Cutter Service in pursuit!" Edith predicted.

"No, I'll take care of that," Andy Crews promised. "I'll say we've left one man on board the ship, to scuttle her if you're pursued. By the time they get out there and find it's not true, we'll all be far away."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The plan sounded good to Ragger. "We'll go look at your boat tomorrow."

"When's this supposed to happen?" Fernandez wanted to know.

"Sometime around a week from Wednesday. June seventeenth. The ship is due about then. We'll have to be out there every day next week watching for her, watching for the rocket signal from my man on board."

Later, after more talk, Ragger ordered drinks for everyone. The scheme that would make him famous was under way, and he had a feeling nothing could stop it.

When the three hired men had gone, Ragger asked Andy Crews, "Are you sure you can trust them?"

"I'm sure. For that much money they'd kill their own mothers."

Ragger downed the rest of his rum. "How about guns?"

"Model 1873 carbines for you and the three of them. Winchesters—the best made. Plus standard issue U.S. Cavalry model revolvers, caliber 44/40, to carry in a belt holster."

"That's Indian-fighting gear!"

"You'll be thankful for it. Those French seamen just might decide to put up a fight. I got you some smoke bombs, too, to confuse things when you come alongside."

Ragger chuckled. "Andy, my boy, I'm glad to see you've kept up your contacts with the military."

Some hours later, back at Ragger's dingy two-room apartment on Delancey Street, Edith asked him, "What is it, Ragger? I want to know what it is we're stealing."

"First of all, we're not stealing it—only holding it for ransom. And second, it's best you don't know quite yet."

"Andy knows, doesn't he?"

"Sure, Andy has to know. But nobody else right now."

"How do you know they'll pay a half million for it? I can't think of anything but gold that'd be worth near that much!"

"The contents of those crates are actually valued at $450,000, but I'm sure they'll pay a half million to have it safe and sound."

"How're you splitting the money?"

"Twenty-five thousand to each of those three, like you heard, plus the same to a French seaman named Vascal who's on the ship. Andy's getting one hundred thousand because he's my key man. And that leaves three hundred thousand for you and me and South America."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"That must be more money than there is in the world!"

"Oh, there's lots of money in the world for them that can get it. Them with the brains."

The next day they went down to the Brooklyn docks and looked over the boat Andy had selected. It was a cutter like the ones the government used for its coastal patrol, single-masted like a sloop but having the mast farther astern. "A good fast ship," Andy said. "You could probably outrun them with this even if they did decide to chase you."

"Yes," Ragger agreed. "I like it. But I doubt if even a hundred crates would have fit on this deck space. You must have known I'd go along with the change of plan when you picked it out."

"It's the only way that makes sense, Ragger. But the boat's only rented for next week, so there wasn't that much to lose if you overruled me."

"What'd you tell the owner?"

"That we were going deep-sea fishing. Of course he didn't believe me, but he didn't care. Probably figures we're running in illegal aliens or something."

In the wheelhouse Ragger turned to Edith. "Do you think you can handle it while we're on board the *Isère?* Just hold steady alongside in case we have to make a quick exit?"

She tried the wheel. "I think so. Give me some practice while we're out sailing around."

"It might be several hours or even a day," Andy Crews cautioned her. "But once the French crew is subdued and locked up, Ragger could relieve you."

For the next few nights they went over the plans again and again, figuring every angle, trying to anticipate every response the police could make. "After I deliver my ransom demand, we enter the crucial phase," Andy said. "If they decide to ignore me and order the Revenue Cutters or the Navy after you, we're all in big trouble."

"They won't chance it," Ragger said with assurance. "I'd scuttle the ship and they know it. And that's one thing I'm sure they won't risk. I know how politicians react."

Andy snickered. "You've been reading books."

"And newspapers. I may not be as smart as you, Andy, but I'm no dope an' don't you forget that! This whole scheme was my idea. It's *me* that's goin' down in the history books."

"Along with John Wilkes Booth," Edith remarked.

"Now what in hell is gettin' at *you?*"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Nothing, Ragger, nothing. It's just that you keep harping so much on wanting to commit the crime of the century. Sometimes I think those history books are more important to you than the money."

"Come on," Andy said. "It won't do us any good to fight among ourselves."

Ragger calmed down. They were both right, of course. He hadn't come all this way with his planning to let it fly out the window. "All right," he said. "We take her out next Monday, armed and ready to go."

Cutting through the early morning mists off Sandy Hook, the boat made better headway than Ragger had expected. "When we get back, I'll have to compliment Andy," he told Edith. "It's got speed and it handles well. Want to try the wheel for a bit?"

They traded places and he watched her steering. "I can manage it," she decided.

"Good! You'll do fine."

They cruised back and forth the entire day without catching sight of the ship they awaited. Finally, heading in to the dock in Brooklyn, Edith asked, "You're sure it's due now?"

"Around Wednesday. I just wanted to make sure it didn't arrive ahead of schedule. Vascal has no way to communicate their progress to me."

On Tuesday morning they went out again.

The three in the crew were more at ease this time, and they joked among themselves as the cutter headed east toward the Atlantic shipping lanes. Ragger had a feeling in his bones that this would be the day. He kept his carbine ready while he used a spyglass to scan the horizon for ships.

"I told Andy we might stay out all night and sleep on the boat," he said to Edith. "I can't take a chance on missing the *Isère*."

Edith gave the wheel to Peters and came over to where Ragger stood. "This thing means a great deal to you, doesn't it?"

"Of course! It means we'll be rich."

"We'll be rich if you can trust Andy Crews."

He looked hard at her, seeking some meaning in her spray-swept face. "I'd trust Andy with my life."

"That's just what you're doing, Ragger."

He put down the spyglass. "What are you trying to tell me?"

"He's planning to collect the half million and take off for South America with all of it."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"That's crazy. I don't believe it!"

She took a deep breath. "He asked me to go with him, Ragger. He wants me to leave you aboard the *Isère* and sail the cutter to Sandy Hook to meet him."

"I don't believe it," Ragger said again.

But somehow he did.

It would be Andy Crews then who had committed the crime of the century, Andy Crews whose name went down in the history books.

"Ragger?"

"We're heading home," he decided suddenly, barking orders at young Peters. "I'll deal with Andy."

It was near evening when the cutter docked, and Ragger headed for the Brooklyn tavern where they had held the first full meeting. He knew Andy Crews would be waiting there for the carrier pigeon that would tell him they had seized the *Isère*.

Andy was in the upstairs room alone. He turned toward the door as Ragger entered, a look of surprise on his face. "What's wrong? What are you doing back here?"

"You know what's wrong, Andy."

Crews saw the carbine in Ragger's hands, and he went for his own gun, screaming in the same instant, "For God's sake, don't shoot! I don't know what you're—"

Ragger fired once, and the bullet toppled Andy Crews backward. Then, suddenly, there was the sound of police whistles. Ragger turned and tried to run, but already the room was filling with men.

The Commissioner of Police looked up from his desk as Edith Murphy entered. He smiled and extended his hand. "That was a fine job you did, Miss Murphy. You forestalled a very serious crime."

She smiled slightly. "The crime of the century, Ragger called it."

"I suppose it might well have been if they'd gotten away with it. When I assigned you to him six months ago, I never dreamed he was into anything more than some waterfront crime."

"Oh, Ragger had big ideas—there's no doubt of that. But I never thought it would end in murder. I had to get the cutter back to port before the French ship appeared, and that lie about Andy Crews was the only way I could think of."

"Crews was a bad one—he won't be missed. Maybe your lie even had a bit of truth to it. We discovered he had booked a passage to South America. Anyway, the whole thing's much simpler this way. We've charged Ragger with second-degree murder and we're sure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a quick conviction. The business about the *Isère* and its cargo need never come out."

She walked to the window, thinking still of her days with Ragger. "So he'll go to prison for killing a man in a barroom brawl, and his name will be forgotten after all. Not exactly the crime of the century that he planned on."

"No," the Commissioner agreed. "But you'll get a promotion for this, even so. A fine bit of work."

She was staring out toward New York harbor, though she couldn't see it from the window. She was staring as Ragger had stared on that misty night just ten days ago.

The *Isère* had reached Sandy Hook on June seventeenth, and soon an army of workmen would begin assembling the contents of those 220 large crates.

And one day next year on an island in the harbor, the Statue of Liberty would be dedicated.

"Q"

DETECTIVERSE

GOTHIC SHMOTHIC

by PHYLLIS WHITE

His name is ancient and his house is haunty,
He's darkly handsome with a touch of Brontë.

Is some old sorrow not yet healed by time,
Or is he musing on a hidden crime?

His tongue is oft sequestered by the cat,
And when he speaks—what did he mean by that?

He vanishes for days, pops up by night—
Is this man sinister or Mr. Right?

© 1985 by Phyllis White.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Anniversary **25th** *Edition*

ENJOY 22 EXCITING STORIES IN

ELLERY QUEEN'S LATEST ANTHOLOGY

More LOST LADIES and MEN

This companion volume to the earlier ELLERY QUEEN Anthologies LOST MEN and LOST LADIES, focuses on wicked, wayward, wonderful women and men who are missing or worse. Order your copy today for just $4.50.

☐ **YES!** *Please rush my copy of Ellery Queen's MORE LOST LADIES AND MEN. I have enclosed my check or money order for $4.50.*

Mail to: Ellery Queen Anthologies
P.O. Box 999 Ridgefield, NJ 07657

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery. Available only in the U.S.

DQF5X

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In her cover letter when she submitted this story to EQMM's Department of "First Stories," R. E. Lane said: "Have you ever had events happen to you that you wondered about at a later date and could not decide about the details? This is a story about such an experience. The main character cannot remember exactly what happened and it is haunting her." As well it might . . . !

WHAT HAPPENED

by R. E. LANE

I didn't kill him. The inquest verdict said I didn't. I've got to talk. Chairs, table, house, someone please listen.

Oh, we'd been arguing a lot about money: how we wanted to spend it, pay bills, or save. It had gotten to be the weekend sport. Cheap shots at one another to see who could dig the deepest. We had lived together for two years and the honeymoon period was over. We were into the realities of life. I couldn't believe we were at such a low point in our relationship.

I had an out-of-town job that week. There was spare time and I tried to think things through and decided we had to work it out. There weren't any quick answers. It would take time and I figured I would make the first move to get the situation solved when I returned home.

That night I flew in from L.A. My job is in fashion and I love every minute I spend dressing windows, organizing shows, and displaying accessories. But it's stressful and that week was full with a new show and the trip.

Well, I came home and the house was a mess. He had left his shirt, pants, and jackets draped over the chairs and couch in the living room. Dirty dishes were strewn over the table and counters in the kitchen. Flies buzzed over the sink. I heard water dripping

© 1985 by R. E. Lane.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at a fast pace and went to the downstairs bathroom. He had taken his shower and left the faucet dripping. As if we had money to dribble down the drain.

The upstairs bedroom was in a shambles, with the covers on the floor and his underwear, clean and dirty, on the dresser. All my plans to work things out flew over the bedroom balcony.

I put on my jeans and a T-shirt and began to pick up the clothes. I went from room to room, gathering his things and throwing them in the bottom of his closet. Then I started on the rest of the house, cleaning, dusting, and putting things where they belonged. I made my way to the kitchen. About the time I got the dishwasher going and was scrubbing the pots and pans, he came waltzing through the door.

"Hey, when's dinner?" he yelled.

I said, "When you put the hamburgers on. I'm busy."

He stomped out the door.

"Go ahead and leave—that's your stinking way of doing things!" I screamed after him.

I took two tranquilizers, drank a hot cup of spiked coffee, and went back to work. The rest of the evening I went on talking to myself, keyed up and tense, then I took two more pills and decided on a hot bath. That didn't calm me so I went back down to the kitchen for a glass of warm milk and out onto the patio to relax. And there was his baseball equipment where he left it after one of his weekly games. Who knows how long it had been there? I gathered it up and ran upstairs with it—then, angry and disgusted, threw it on the stairwell landing instead of putting it in the closet. The warm milk hadn't helped, so I took two more sleeping pills and went to bed.

But my muscles were taut, my head ached. We will never solve this, was all I could think—he's a slob. I tossed and turned and at midnight I took two more sleeping pills from the bottle by the side of the bed and drifted into fuzzy sleep.

Later, I'm not sure how long, I woke up and heard the bedroom door open. He staggered around the room. I wanted to scream at him, but decided to pretend I didn't hear him. He'd come home drunk before.

He went to the bathroom and began to gargle, of all things. I heard him come out and go back out into the hall. There was a crash. He yelled, "You stupid broad, are you trying to kill me? I'll throw you

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out! This house and everything in it's in my name! You'll get nothing!"

That did it. It was true. To keep peace and feed his male ego, everything we'd bought together—the house, the couch, dining set, bedroom set, and accessories were all on paper in his name. But I'd paid full half of the cost and two-thirds of the new carpet. Did he really think he could throw me out?

I got up. Dizziness engulfed me and I swayed back and forth. Those pills had finally taken effect. When I got to the door I screeched something out at him, I don't remember what. He was on his knees, rolling the baseball around the hall. I remember he picked it up and in a thick drunken voice said, "This is the signature of the mighty Pete Rose." He stared at it for a moment, then the ball rolled out of his hand toward the stairs.

My anger crescendoed. "You filthy lush!" I yelled. He grabbed the bat and got to his feet. Everything was misty—fading. In—out. In—out. I reeled. We yelled and yelled at each other. I reached for the bat. He wobbled toward the stairs. I went back to bed, groping through the fog.

When I woke up again it was ten o'clock. The light seemed green and eery. He wasn't in bed. I wondered what happened to him, but figured he must have slept downstairs. I tried to stand up, but felt dizzy and decided to wait a while. I turned the bedside radio on and dozed for about an hour, then got up and started for the bathroom. The baseball mitt was visible out in the hall. I shook my head and went in and showered. Afterward, I put on my robe and started down the stairs.

He was lying on the bottom landing, his head bashed in, blood and matter all over the stair and rug. The bat lay by the kitchen door, bloody. The patio door was wide open. I screamed and screamed.

Somehow I managed to call the police. My mind was gone. I just told them over and over and over, "I found him that way!" They took me to the hospital. The doctor gave me a sedative and I slipped into blackness.

The district attorney said there would be an inquest in a few weeks. I told them I was asleep when he came in and I didn't remember anything except finding him at the bottom of the stairs. But that picture runs over and over in my mind like a movie. I hear him say "stupid broad" and the name Pete Rose. Then the picture expands and I reach for the bat. I didn't kill him. But did I tell them I reached for the bat . . . ?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The day after the inquest of Derek Bennett's death, police officer Joe Graff stepped from his patrol car and ran toward the city morgue. The rain pelted down, soaking his overcoat. He entered the lobby of the building and relaxed in the warmth. A man in a white coat behind the counter looked up.

"Hello, Joe—what brings you here in this rain?"

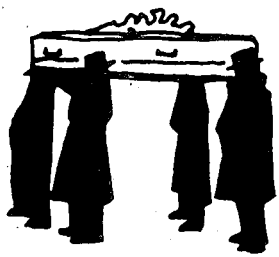
"Hi, Karl," Graff said. "That derelict we found in the ditch out by the Dubain farm last night—we've taken him in on suspicion of some burglaries in the past. Have you got a report on him yet?"

"Nothing definite. The preliminary report says the injuries suggest he was hit by a car."

"Well, we found a few valuables on him but maybe they have nothing to do with the Bennett case. I was just over at the Dubain place and found this next to where we found him." He took an object from his pocket and rolled it across the counter.

Karl studied it. "Strange what people hang onto." He turned it over in his hands. "The signature looks like a ballpoint pen, not a print—the ink's run some from the rain. I wonder why he'd hang onto a baseball signed Pete Rose."

Joe shook his head gravely. "I guess we'll never know."



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Randye Lordon's first published story, "The House on Marigold Hill," appeared in the March 1984 issue. It's always a special pleasure to present a second story by an author whose first fiction appeared in these pages.

In his mind's eye he could see her as though he were watching snippets from a movie, each flash on her face revealing some new aspect of her he had never known before. "The love's gone, Mitchell," she had said, "I don't know where it is. I need to be alone . . ."

THE SETTLEMENT

by RANDYE LORDON

Mitchell Smith decided, upon awakening one grey morning, it was time. He glanced around his small bedroom and thought of his house upstate. Were he lying in the bed he had been accustomed to for the past fifteen years, he would be watching the leaves of the oak tree waving outside his window bidding him a good morning. Instead he observed the directionless journey of a cockroach on the wall opposite his bed. He began to plan the day. It was Saturday. She would be at work.

Kicking the topsheet off, he jumped from the warmth of his bed and padded barefoot into the bathroom. He smiled at his reflection in the mirror and ran his fingers through his salt-and-pepper hair. Showered and shaved, he admired himself once more before he stepped out into the city he loathed.

The first chill of autumn was in the air. He turned onto Broadway, barely noticing the rantings of a bag lady who reminded him of his fourth-grade teacher.

The Greek coffee shop smelled of bacon and ammonia. He finished his third cup of coffee, overtipped the surly waiter, and paid the cashier.

© 1985 by Randye Lordon.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the hour and forty-five minutes it took to drive the familiar stretch of road between the city and his house, he whistled softly, refusing to allow himself to think. How many times had he told her during the same drive, "This road's too beautiful to clutter with thoughts." He turned into the private driveway and drove the last quarter mile in silence.

The gravel road crunched under his rubber-soled shoes as he walked slowly toward the house. He stopped and drank in the façade of the hundred-year-old house he had first seen when he was thirty. She had laughed when he'd told her of his dream to buy the "old wreck on the hill," as the locals called it, but she finally agreed. Her inheritance was well spent and they had built the house from scratch together. "Sometimes, Mitch, I think you love this old house more than you do me," she'd chided him, and he'd wrapped his arms around her and held her close.

His key slid easily into the lock and the chamber released when he turned it firmly to the right. She had lied about having the locks changed. He placed the paper bag in the living room and fixed himself a drink, then stood at the doorway to his study.

She had rearranged the furniture to suit someone else's needs—perhaps her own, perhaps not. He sat in his captain's chair and moved the lamp from the left of the desk to the right, slid the dictionary from the shelf and sat it upright next to the lamp. He placed his glass atop the blotter, then leaned back into the creaking old chair and shut his eyes.

It was hardly an empty silence. In his mind's eye he could see her as though he were watching snippets from a movie, each flash on her face revealing some new aspect of her he had never known before. "The love's gone, Mitchell, I don't know where it is. I need to be alone."

He opened his eyes, half expecting her to be sitting in the same chair she had sat in when she calmly explained why she had been so distanced. But the room had been changed and his eyes came to rest on a spinning wheel. He rose quickly from his chair and closed the door behind him as he left the study.

As he wandered through the house, he noticed small changes she had made here and there—the repositioning of a chair, the removal of a table. During the four months he had been living in the city, he knew she had methodically been erasing his presence from the house. He steered clear of the kitchen, always her domain.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Surprisingly, the master bedroom wasn't changed. She had left in a hurry that morning, neglecting to make the bed. He took his time tucking in the sheets, flattening out the blanket of baby-blue with its satin edge. He hung her robe on the back of the bathroom door and, as an afterthought, glanced into the medicine cabinet. Women's needs filled the shelves and he smiled openly as he closed the cabinet door. He stretched out on top of the bed and nodded to the oak tree. He sipped his drink, keeping his shoes off the side of the bed, and inhaled deeply. The pillows were filled with her.

When his glass was drained, he returned to the living room. He poured himself another drink and noticed the pictures on the mantelpiece had been removed. He walked to the window. She had neglected the lawn and had forgotten to cover the garden with a tarp. He took a long drink from his glass. He returned to the sofa and took the first gallon container from the paper bag. Climbing the stairs, he splashed the noxious liquid first in the upstairs bedrooms, then halfway down the staircase. He trailed the second gallon through the main floor, most of it in the study. Finally, calmly, he walked to the front door and locked it, knowing he would be using the kitchen door as his escape route, then sat on the living room sofa, enjoying the fumes he was inhaling, and pulled the phone toward him.

It rang three times before a stranger answered.

"Amelia Grayson Real Estate."

He asked for Amelia and was put on hold. He waited patiently.

"May I help you?" Her voice filtered through the receiver, businesslike and strong.

"Good morning, my dear—how are you today?" He was magnanimous.

"Mitch?" He heard her irritation and crossed his legs.

"Yes."

"Mitchell, I'm very busy right now—is this important?"

He ran his tongue along his lips. "I thought we might have a little business chat." He interrupted her before she could speak. "You forgot to cover the vegetable garden." He listened to her breathing and continued on. "Now you and I both know it's not fair that you have the house, honey."

"Mitchell, we've been over this a hundred times." Muffled voices in the background pulled her away from him. He waited. "Listen, Mitch," she said when she returned, "it was your decision to move

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the city. You said it would be good for your writing." She paused. "How's the book coming along?"

"The roaches ate it. We're back to square one, Amelia. You knew the only thing I wanted from the settlement was the house. You owed me that." His back had begun to perspire.

"Mitchell, not only is the house legally mine, but I love it as much as you do." He could hear her lighting a cigarette.

"I thought you gave up smoking."

"I went back." She paused. "Listen, I'm really swamped here. Do me a favor. Why don't you come to my office right now? There's some property in the area that's perfect for you."

"Darling, that just won't do. The house is *mine*." He finished his drink. He could feel her squirming. There was nothing else for him to say, so he gently placed the receiver back in its cradle and hoisted himself up from the sofa.

Halfway up the staircase, he took a book of matches from his back pocket. He lit one and held the tiny flame against an upper step. The carpet caught fire immediately and followed the trail of gasoline up toward the bedrooms.

From the kitchen doorway, he tossed another match into the dining room. It went out before it reached the floor. He could hear the fire snapping upstairs and already felt the heat. He crouched down and ignited another match, which he placed directly on the liquid on the floor. A thin line of fire raced through the dining room out into the living room. He turned his back on the flames and walked into the kitchen.

The yellow appliances sparkled in the afternoon sun. He briefly surveyed the room. She'd changed the curtains on the window over the counter. It wasn't until he moved toward the door that he noticed another change—a thin metal pole that protruded from the center of the door, its base wedged into a grip that had been bored into the floor. A police lock. He'd seen a number of them in the city. He pulled at the pole. It didn't budge. It had been locked from the outside. ("I don't trust this lock Mitch," she'd said, "we should get one as good as the one on the front door.")

He kicked at the pole. He took a deep breath, refusing to allow his panic to surface. Smoke was beginning to billow around him. He climbed on top of the counter and tore the new curtains from the window, where she had installed a wrought-iron gate. He broke the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

window and tried pushing the gate away, taking in deep breaths of the fresh air.

The smoke was getting thicker. He jumped back down from the counter and turned to run to the front door. At the kitchen door, he confronted a raging fire. There was a crash and he knew part of the second floor was already collapsing. He heard himself screaming through the din of the fire. His eyes were burning from the smoke. He looked down and saw his left pants leg was on fire, though he couldn't feel it.

He was laughing and crying as he wrapped his jacket around his leg to extinguish the fire. He crawled toward the back door, barely able to see it through the black smoke. He was weakening, but thrust his fist through the small glass pane in the door. Blood spewed from his wrist as he blindly grappled for the knob. The heat was overwhelming. He was choking as he reached for a heavy object to break the door. In the distance he thought he heard sirens. The kitchen phone began to ring.

He slid to the floor, listening to the destruction, the sirens, and the unanswered phone. He cuddled himself against the door. I won, he thought as the flames inched toward him. It's mine now. He shut his eyes and smiled. "I won," he whispered as he fell into unconsciousness.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In submitting her second story to EQMM (her first appeared in the April issue), Joan McAteer wrote: "This concerns the bad things that can happen when one con artist meets up with another." A very apt synopsis . . .

TELL ME MY MIND, SALLY ANN

by JOAN McATEER

She turned in the covers and scooted close again, so that her knee rested on his hip and her head fit snug beneath his chin. He lay flat, his eyes opening and closing in tune with the rhythmic heaving of his chest.

Winding strands of hair from his chest around her fingers, she talked of knowing his mind and what was best for him. Occasionally she would give a tug on one of the longer copper hairs, causing him to twitch. She would giggle, then he would pull her close again, tell her she was a naughty girl and kiss the bridge of her nose.

"Tell me my mind, Sally Ann," he said, stroking her long thick locks, "tell it again like you did just before we—you know. Go ahead and talk some more."

"Well." She sighed in a long-drawn-out fashion as she chewed on her bottom lip and studied the ceiling. "Like I done tole you already, Andrew Collins, you gonna be famous someday. I mean really famous."

"Go on," he urged, kissing her hair.

"And your picture is gonna be in all the papers, Andrew."

"Go on, go on, honey doll," he coaxed.

"Andrew," she said in a reprimanding tone, pulling herself up onto her elbow and running the heel of her hand over his chest, "Andrew Delano Collins!"

© 1985 by Joan McAteer.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What, honey doll, what?"

"Andrew, I've commenced athinking. Don't you figure it might seem silly-like, you a wearin' that iddy bitty ring on your finger when your picture gets taken? You're too big an' tall to be wearin' a little ring like that."

"Why dontcha hush 'bout that ring, honey doll?" he pleaded in her ear. "Just go on talkin' like you wuz before, about me becomin' famous an' all?"

"Well, you know," she whined, running her fingernails back and forth across his chest, "people that reads the paper might think you are funny-like wearin' a ring like that un. Besides, Andrew," she whispered, kissing his fingers, "you said back there when we first met that them stones was the exact color of my eyes. Are they, Andrew? Tell me again exactly like you said it before. Begin, Andrew, with 'No pop-bottle glass, this ring—them's emeralds! Them's the very color of your eyes, honey doll.' Say it to me again, just like I just said it then, Andrew. I wanna hear it. An', Andrew," she said, stroking his fingers, 'let me wear the ring while you're recitin' the words.

"Andrew, it's not important where your shoes are. Don't think about your shoes now, Andrew. When I get to your chin, right there on that little dimple place, on my way up to kissin' your eyelids, you slip that emerald ring onto my finger—this finger here, Andrew, right next to the little one. Get ready now, here comes the kisses.

"What? What? No it *ain't!* It *ain't* pop-bottle glass, Andrew Collins! You just sayin' that now to turn my mind around so's you won't have to let me wear it. You tole me in the truck it was your mama's and that it cost a thousand dollars. An' you said it once belonged to a princess from one of them foreign lands. You tole me, Andrew Collins, that afterwards you'd let me wear it because it was the exact color of my eyes.

"*No*, I ain't helpin' you find your shoes! I want that ring, Andrew Collins, and it ain't pop-bottle glass neither! It ain't! Now take it off. I don't want to hear no more about it being stuck on you for life neither. It's mine now, Andrew, you tole me how I'd look like a princess wearin' it.

"Give it here now, Andrew, give it *here!* You'd better! You'd just better, Andrew! I betcha as how I kin get it off!"

"Ain't ya gonna take pictures of Andrew, Mr. Reporter? I promised him you would. I tole him how people from all over would be aseein'

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his handsome face in the newspapers and be atalkin' 'bout him on the radio and the TV. I tole him how bein' married to a princess would make him real famous-like. I saw to it, too, that he wouldn't be lookin' silly-like when his picture got taken. He's restin' real peaceful-like. Them nice people in white are seein' to him.

"You want me to hold up my hand so them emerald stones will be right next to my eyes? I want to look like a real princess, you know. Make your camera flash real bright-like now. I don't want my emerald stones lookin' like no pop-bottle glass!"

"Q"

DETECTIVERSE

JOY RIDING

by RUTH REA

Joy, she shot her husband—
But only in the leg.
She surely had compassion
For when she heard him beg,
"Please take me to a doctor!"
She put him in the car
And then she drove around a while—
He thought it pretty far.
He lost an awful lot of blood
While she went driving by.
She couldn't find a doctor—
But she didn't really try.
Eventually he passed away—
The bleeding took its toll.
But Joy, she didn't kill him—
She simply made the hole.

© 1985 by Ruth Rea.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* short story by

GEORGE BAXT

A wicked offering from George Baxt, who has justifiably been called one of the finest of modern satirists . . .

HANDIG

by GEORGE BAXT

Do you know what it is to be cursed and branded as Not Bankable in the motion-picture profession? It means you won't be hired to star in or direct or produce a movie because the money people, meaning not just the studios but the banks who supply them with funding, won't put their money where your talent is. In my case, my financing credibility began evaporating five years ago. After fifteen years of glittering success as a director, I had three multi-million-dollar failures in a row over a period of five years and so the bottom had dropped out of my career.

I'm not a poor man by any means, despite the fact I'm still supporting three ex-wives, none of whom will remarry because they can't connect with anyone who has a yearly income greater than what I pay each of them. I've invested wisely, mostly in real estate here and abroad, and well might you say why don't I finance my films myself.

Easier said than done. I needed fifty million dollars for the film I was obsessed with directing and producing, and I didn't have that kind of money. I'd written the script myself and everyone who read it told me it was my masterpiece. Filming the life of Valerian Handig was an obsession with me, the way Richard Attenborough was obsessed by Mahatma Gandhi. I supposed if I convinced some superstar to ally himself with me and agree to portray Handig, finding the financing would be that much easier. But what superstar could play

© 1985 by George Baxt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him? Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas were both wrong, and, besides, they were no longer superstars.

"Rewrite the script to fit one of these young kid actors who are hot at the box office," advised my lawyer and business manager Morton Grimm. He named a few. Morton doesn't know how close he came to being my ex-lawyer and business manager.

One of my girl friends, Elsa Shirer, a nutritionist, had read in some paper that Barbra Streisand was desperate for a story for her next movie and why couldn't I tailor *Handig* for her because, after all, she masqueraded as a boy in *Yentl*? I no longer see Elsa Shirer.

I went to see an important man at Plexus Pictures, Roger Solong. Roger swore he read my script personally and didn't rely on the decision of one of a small army of illiterates who are paid to read scripts and digest them for the large army of illiterates who make decisions at the movie studios. "Ira," he said to me in a voice wringing wet with impending rejection, "this is one of the most moving scripts you've ever written. I was weeping so hard my current wife Ariadne begged me to stand away from the pitcher of bloody marys, she was so worried I'd water the drink. I read sections aloud to our brunch guests surrounding the pool last Sunday and some of them were so overcome we thought at first it was heat stroke. But, Ira—" he slammed his fist on his solid oak desk "—I can't recommend investing fifty megatrons in the story of a martyr. Martyrs don't make money, they only die violent deaths."

"But *Gandhi* made money," I insisted.

"It cost half *your* budget and it took Dickie over twenty years to get it financed—and even after he shot it he had trouble getting a major to distribute. Ira, by me you're still one of the greatest. That your last three pictures lost over ninety-seven million dollars is absolutely a tragedy. Your break-dance version of *Giselle* should have cleaned up. But maybe you should have used somebody younger than Irene Cara."

I had wasted my time on Roger Solong, not because he rejected the project but because two days later he was deposed from Plexus Pictures on charges of embezzlement, procurement, and bad taste. That he is being groomed to run for the presidency of the United States is, of course, ironic and I'd like to get those film rights, too.

Handig.

Valerian Handig. What a fantastic story. Where he came from nobody is sure. In his lifetime, no man or woman stepped forth to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

claim him as a son or brother (or even nephew) and yet he captured the imagination, hearts, and souls of millions of followers, worshippers, disciples, whatever you wish to label them. He was a tall, rangy, magnificently handsome man, sexually exciting in his loincloth and damask shawls. I'd heard him preach at Hollywood Bowl and was almost overcome by his awesome majesty.

What an actor he could have been! When he went on television, he wiped out the opposition. When he preached in the Soviet Union, the entire regime was almost deposed, but unfortunately Handig had to hop a llama into neighboring China before his powers took full effect. At one point I thought seriously of exploring Russian financing, but a kindly communist at their embassy advised me to cool it. Five years ago, before starting my artistic deline, Handig was at the peak of his powers. He had mesmerized millions. He could have overpowered the United States. And that remains the most popular theory behind his murder.

The C.I.A. was the immediate suspect, of course. My housekeeper blames the C.I.A. for the high cost of veal at our meat market. But the C.I.A. couldn't have been as crude, as violent, as vicious as Handig's murderer. His body was found in his bedroom in his magnificent Bel Air estate. He was lying on the floor, his head a bloody pulp, his features almost unrecognizable, identification made necessary by his dentist, who later committed suicide, although he was not a suspect.

The world went into mourning. All major networks cancelled their prime-time programs for seven days, much to the relief and gratitude of the American minority who deplore the submoronic state of television today. There were countless suicides and attempted suicides and his funeral was produced by David Wolper.

But Handig's murderer was still at large.

It had been five years since Handig was murdered, five years that his murderer had sneered at the police, and five years since my career had plummeted lower than the value of the pound against the dollar. When I decided to try to revive my fading career with a movie about Handig, I consulted Detective Edgar Dwane, who had been part of the investigating team still baffled by the great man's killing. Dwane was charming and affable and not like any detective I've seen in the movies or on television, which is probably because his dialogue was his own and not the creation of some Hollywood hack.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The case is still open," he advised me while cracking his knuckles, "and I for one ain't giving up on it ever. I mean, it ain't just that a man was brutally murdered, it's that the world was robbed of a great religious leader, a man who was an inspiration to all of us."

"Any fresh leads?" I asked, wondering if fresh leads showed up after four years.

(This meeting took place over a year ago, before I started writing the scenario.)

"Nah, not really." He leaned back and his swivel chair groaned for mercy. Dwane was quite sizeable. "We still get crank phone calls and crank letters. We still get people coming in here and accusing wives, husbands, mailmen, and snotty checkout girls of killing Handig. And the trouble is, we can't ignore any of them. You can't tell when one of them is the actual break you've been waiting for." He sighed a very sad sigh. "You know what's going to happen when word gets out you're planning a movie on Handig? My activities accelerate. Cranks will come out from under rocks and from behind peeling wallpaper. Even *you'll* start getting their attention."

"Maybe that won't be so bad," I said. "Maybe I'll come up with the break you've been waiting for."

"You know something?" Dwane smiled, revealing a jagged set of teeth. "You might be right. You just might be right at that!"

"Tell me, how can a murderer be this smart? I mean, I know there are thousands of unsolved crimes, but Valerian Handig, murdered in his own bedroom in an estate guarded by hundreds of disciples and private police—how could his assassin have slipped in and out undetected?"

"Well, obviously," said Dwane with a lavish gallic gesture, "there was a way to slip in and out undetected."

I couldn't top that one, so I asked, "Can I expect your cooperation? Will you help me when I come to reconstructing the crime?"

"Of course. Except for your last three stinkers, I'm a great admirer of yours. I mean, holy cow, who makes a movie about Hitler in which he and Eva Braun end up as concert pianists?"

"It was supposed to be a satire."

"I didn't get it."

"Neither did anybody else."

Dwane's eyes narrowed and I held my breath. "You ain't turning Handig into no satire, are you?"

"Of course not! How could you even suggest such a thing?"

"I seen your last three pictures . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When I set to work writing the screenplay, word got out fast as to what I was up to. I saw to that. And the phone began ringing again. My most recent ex-wife, Emma Norris, an aerobics nut, was the first to get through.

"Ira, you're hardly the man to do the life of Valerian Handig."

"Thank you for your vote of confidence."

"I mean, you haven't a religious bone in your body. I know you went to see Handig preach but that was only because of Viola."

Viola, I may as well tell you now, was my daughter by my first wife, Adelaide Drume, a soprano of dubious talents who caught pneumonia and died during an Alaskan tour of a revival of *Blossom Time*. I brought up Viola with an assist from my eclectic choice of future wives.

"Just because Viola became an exponent of Handigistics you forced yourself to try and understand Handig, but you never did, did you? And if you don't understand Handig, how can you interpret him honestly?"

I said something terribly nasty to Emma and even threw in a few remarks about Jane Fonda and Raquel Welch for good measure. (I knew I'd never work with either of them—Fonda's too muscular and Welch is Unbankable—at least, as I write this.)

Viola—the apple of my eye, a Vassar graduate, beginning to blossom as an actress of great beauty, with a spiritual inner glow that made her *Saint Joan* at an Off-Broadway theater light up New York with a luminosity it never saw before and will never see again. She met Handig in New York when he was signing autographs for one of his most famous books, *Hand in Hand with Handig*, and fell under his magnetic spell. Soon she was lost to the theater and then she was lost to me.

My second wife, Norella Gibbs, still phoned to ask what I was doing, if anything, to find Viola. Viola "disappeared" shortly before Handig was murdered. I write "disappeared" in quotes because I knew she was somewhere near me. I prayed that if *Handig* was filmed at last and she saw it, she would come back to me. I knew she was deeply in love with Handig, but I almost murdered my mistress of that time, Sophia Grinoli, who knew she was on the way out of my life and, like the vindictive spitfire I should have recognized her to be, began spreading the rumor that my darling Viola was responsible for Handig's death because she heard he was having an affair with the star of a night-time television soap. Sophia was apparently convincing. I had to move from Bel Air (I didn't live too

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

far from Handig's venue) to Pacific Palisades because of all the rocks thrown through my windows. Not to mention the burning crosses on my lawn.

Detective Edgar Dwane began to be fired by my enthusiasm for the movie and we started seeing a lot of each other—at first just at his office or a local cafeteria for pie and coffee while I was doing my initial research, then later on he came by for lunch or dinner. One day he came into my study, with a glass of milk in one hand and a ham and cheese on rye in the other, and stared at my mountains of notes. "You gonna use all that in the movie? It'll run for thirty hours!"

"It'll run about four hours with an intermission. That's why I need fifty million dollars."

He sat down opposite me and I could sense his eyes trying to bore through my skull like laser rays. "You're a real fanatic about this movie, ain't you?"

"It's all I've got, Edgar. It's what keeps me afloat. The hope that it'll bring my career back to the top where it belongs, bring back my daughter."

"Ira," he interrupted me suddenly, "I think I know where you can get fifty million dollars."

I bestowed on him the kind of malevolent smile I usually reserve for landlords, costume designers, and vocal coaches. "Where can I get the fifty million, Edgar?"

"You ever hear of Lucius Breamer?"

"Of course I've heard of Lucius Breamer." Who hasn't heard of Lucius Breamer, the great hotel man? The Paris Breamer. The London Breamer. The Leningrad Breamer. And soon, once the borders are lifted, the Lhasa Breamer.

"Lucius Breamer was a closet Handig follower."

"You're kidding!"

"It's the truth. I know his secretary, Sylvia Grayleg. When I cheat on my wife, I cheat mostly with Sylvia. Last night I was telling her about you—" and he added somewhat shyly "—how we come to be such good friends and all, and she says you should talk to old man Breamer. In his Santa Barbara mansion he's built a shrine to Valerian Handig."

I could feel tears beginning to sting my eyes. Only this morning on my patio I had found a penny with a head up and I knew it could bring me luck.

"Can she get me to Breamer?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dwane's mouth widened into a cavernous grin. "You're lunching with him tomorrow in Santa Barbara. She drew me a map how you get there. Buddy boy, I got a feeling the wheel of fortune is spinning in your direction again."

Can you imagine what my next fifteen hours were like before it was time to get behind the wheel of my Cadillac and direct it to Santa Barbara? I didn't sleep, I didn't eat—but to be perfectly corny, my heart sang. I drove carefully at an even ninety miles an hour and Sylvia Grayleg's map was a model of efficiency. And I could tell she was, too, when she greeted me at the door to his incredible mansion where the door chimes sang the opening bars of "There's a Small Hotel."

"He's waiting for you," said Sylvia, a warm and attractive woman whose sincere manner made me forget her bad legs as she preceded me down the hall to the Handig shrine where Lucius Breamer awaited me.

Lucius Breamer was effusive in his welcome. A table was laid for lunch, but first we had scotch-and-sodas and a wonderful conversation about Handig. The shrine was indescribable. Enough to say that everywhere there were paintings and sculptures and photographs of Handig, artifacts retrieved from his Bel Air mansion at I'm sure a great expense, and in a glass case the only thing that almost made me shudder—the bloodied garments from the day of his murder.

"What a great man! What a great loss!" said Breamer as he poked around trying to debone his smoked mackerel, which was for openers. "If fifty million dollars could in some way unmask his murderer and bring him to justice, it would be worth every penny of the investment."

My heart was truly singing, but only I could hear it. "I've brought a script for you to read, Mr. Breamer."

"Call me Lucius, Ira. I don't have to read a script. I know most of your work. True, your last three pictures were abominations. I mean, where in the world did you get the idea of Bette Midler to play Salome?"

By the time we got to coffee and brandy, the deal was set. *Handig* was under way.

I had fifty million dollars but no distributor, but I felt sure that once the film was completed, edited, and scored, every company in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the world would be clamoring for the distribution rights to the film. There was no problem hiring studio space and just about all my old crew of technicians came rallying to my side—of course, most of them having been unemployed for months. After testing scores of actors, known and unknown, foreign and domestic, gay and straight, I finally chose Bright Bigelow because he had a little of everything.

For twenty-seven months, my whole life was involved with *Handig*.

We went on locations all over the world, to some regions *missionaries* hadn't heard of, and then finally we came back to Los Angeles, to Bel Air, to the very mansion, the very room in which Handig had been assassinated. No one had read that scene as I had written it. It was a dark secret. Edgar Dwane kept wheedling and cajoling, trying to find out how I meant to deal with the unsolved murder. Magazines and newspapers from every corner of the world sent reporters and photographers to cover the event. I was offered five million dollars by an American syndicate to give them an exclusive, but I turned it down. My mind wasn't on money any more. My mind was on getting a distributor for the film. Over the twenty-seven months of shooting, I had been working nights with my editors, not just putting together a rough cut but carefully honing the millions of feet of film into a magnificent epic that ran close to four hours. All that was needed was the footage of Handig's murder. But when, in secret, I showed what we'd done to the powers that be of every major film distributor in America, they all said the same thing—

"Religion is out. Mickey Spillane is in."

Lucius Breamer howled and raged when I told him. "I'll set up my own distributing company—worldwide! We'll operate out of my hotels! Breamer Distribution!"

But that wasn't good enough and we both knew it. There was only one way to make a hot property of *Handig the Movie*, as I now called it (wondering if I could do a *Handig the Movie II*). I phoned Edgar Dwane and invited him to the scene of the crime where I planned to film Handig's murder.

"Gee, Ira, this is indeed a privilege," said Dwane as the camera was being set up and the lights adjusted.

"You're my friend, Edgar. You've become a real good buddy. You deserve this break." Edgar was staring about me, almost deaf to my encomiums. The room was beginning to fill with reporters and pho-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tographers I'd sat up all night alerting. "Edgar, are you listening to me?"

"Oh, sure, good buddy." He playfully socked me on the arm. It still hurts while I'm typing this.

"You must promise me something."

"Anything. Just ask it."

"You must promise to forgive me."

"For what?"

"For what you are about to see."

His face fell.

"You mean it's going to be that bad?"

"Oh, no, Edgar, I think it's going to be that good. Please move out of camera range."

Edgar moved to one side and joined Lucius Breamer and Sylvia Grayleg, who I felt more than any two people deserved to be witnesses to what I knew would be a momentous and historical occasion. I crossed to one of my five assistant directors, a pushy young man recommended to me by a professor of film technique at UCLA, and instructed him to wait five minutes and then yell, "Quiet, roll 'em!" He said nothing.

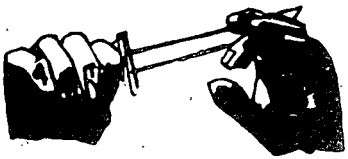
I said, "Blink twice if you've understood me." He blinked twice. He will go far in the film industry.

Five minutes later, I heard a muffled "Quiet, roll 'em." I took a deep breath, felt for the knife in my inside jacket pocket, took a tighter grip on the monkey wrench I held in my right hand, and pushed aside the secret panel that led into the clothes closet as described to me by Viola, and from the closet stepped into the bedroom where Bright Bigelow as Handig knelt on a prayer rug with his head bowed. I leaped on the poor sod of an actor and began raining blows on his head. It was horrible. It was awful. It was ghastly. I was reliving the night I murdered Valerian Handig—murdered him for driving my poor Viola insane. Viola, at that very moment under an assumed name (Mary Miles Pickford) was in a sanitarium outside of Seattle.

Bright Bigelow recovered from his wounds in time to attend the multiple opening of the movie in New York City. The murder scene had been reshot by the pushy assistant director with someone else playing me, but by that time I was headlines across the world—I was back on top again, and I was interviewed in jail by Barbara Walters, giving her the highest rating she's had in her entire career.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes, the film did drive Viola sane and she is now in New York rehearsing the role of Laura Wingfield for a revival of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. Dustin Hoffman has bravely consented to return to the stage as her dippy southern mother, Amanda. Lucius Breamer has forgiven me for murdering Handig and is working with the Civil Liberties Union to secure my freedom. Meantime, I sit in my cell and occupy myself with the screenplay I know will surpass even *Handig the Movie* as a masterpiece—I plan it to star Michael Jackson. *Jack the Ripper, A Boy's Own Story.*



DETECTIVERSE

MYSTERY WRITER'S LAMENT

by JAMES DONNER

I've killed them with guns, needles, and knives,
Doses of poison sprinkled on chives,
Wet wool that smothers, held over the nose,
Deadly inhalants concealed in a rose,
Injections of air into artery lines,
Poisonous vipers coiled under vines,
Axes and hammers, blunt weapons galore,
Small needle injections—unspeakable gore.
I'm tired of murder, but now I've begun it,
I write to keep readers asking "Who done it?"

© 1985 by James Donner.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MOST IGNOBLE CRIME (I SWEAR!)

by MAE Z. SCANLAN

A dapper Frenchman, name of Pierre,
Decided, as he took the air,
That life, for him, had lost its flair
And now was more than he could bear,
And all because of wifey Claire.
They really were a barmy pair:
Where once she'd been a beaut, with hair
Like velvet, and a trim derrière,
Those married years of wear and tear
Had left her dowdy, dull, and square.
She seldom rose from off her chair,
Just sat there, chomping an eclair,
Till poor Pierre, in bleak despair,
Would quit their uninviting lair
And roam the streets, bent low with care.
Pierre, you see, was debonair—
He read Rousseau and Baudelaire,
He saw the dramas of Molière,
And cut a rug like Fred Astaire.
Pierre, in short, had *savoir-faire.*
And there he was, tied down to Claire.
"Mon dieu!" he cried. "It isn't fair!"
He softly muttered, "Do I dare?
Mais oui! But how, and when, and where?"

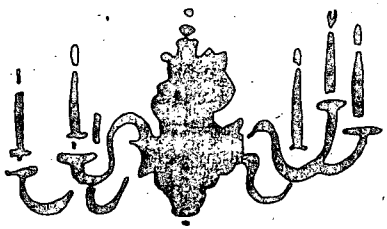
To put an end to this affair,
One night he said, *"Au 'voir, ma chère,"*
And boldly pushed her down the stair.
He grabbed a bite of camembert,
Then stuffed her in an *étagère*
And dragged her through their porte-cochere

© 1985 by Mae Z. Scanlan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Out to his runabout Corvair.
Most quickly did he then repair
To Nice's famous seashore, where
He neatly pushed her in *la mer*.

You think they caught him? *Au contraire.*
His cymbals clang, his trumpets blare.
Today he strolls the Rue d'Albert
With comely mademoiselles to spare.
So ladies, I beseech, beware!
The tale I've told was meant to scare.
Perhaps you think such things are rare,
But this could happen anywhere.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE JURY BOX

by ALLEN J. HUBIN

Particularly to be cherished in our genre are critically reliable topical bibliographies. Not many come to mind; most attention of this sort has been paid to spy fiction.

But now we have superb coverage of another corner of our field in *Novel Verdicts: A Guide to Courtroom Fiction* by Jon L. Breen (Scarecrow Press, $18.50). Breen's range is broad and his insight and judgment sure as he comments in detail on 421 books, identifying their relative courtroom content and assessing quality; and he cites almost 390 other volumes. I think this will become resident on the shelf of standard crime-fiction reference works, and well it should.

Topical bibliographies may be relatively uncommon, but Raymond Chandler has been the subject of extensive attention: biography, bibliography, article and book-length evaluation of his fictions. Yet useful observations are still to be made, as in *Hardboiled Burlesque: Raymond Chandler's Comic Style,* a chapbook by Keith Lewlin, which initiates the Brownstone Chapbook Series (Brownstone Books, 1711 Clifty Drive, Madison, IN, $4.95).

Smart-aleck repartee and humorous commentary have become institutionalized in private-eye fiction, and Chandler played perhaps a larger role than commonly remembered in making this so. Newlin illustrates this in nicely objective fashion.

Mickey Spillane has been the subject of rather general sniping from the literary community, and despite his immense sales figures his works have never been the subject of booklength evaluation. Until, that is, *One Lonely Knight* by Max Allan Collins and James L. Traylor (Popular Press, $19.95 cloth, $8.95 paper). This ably finds the middle ground among uncritical adoration, stuffy academic psychoanalysis, and jugular demolishment. The authors cannot make Spillane into what he is not—a polished stylist, for example—but they can and do highlight Spillane's place and influence in crime fiction. It's common in such treatises as this to find more depth, connection, and intent than really exists, and I suspect this is true here as well, but the authors do perceptively explore the Spillane canon in its direct and adapted forms and tell us a bit about Spillane himself in the bargain.

If, basically, Collins and Traylor come to praise Spillane, J. Kenneth Van Dover is somewhat less respectful in *Murder in the Millions* (Ungar, $12.95 cloth, $7.95 paper), though his, too, is no hatchet job. Here he considers Erle Stanley Gardner and Ian Fleming in addition to Spillane, the three authors being linked by the bestseller status of their works. This is a well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

written analysis which compares and contrasts the character, ethics, and milieus of Perry Mason, Mike Hammer, and James Bond and the styles and backgrounds of their respective creators.

Finally, before I turn to fiction, don't overlook the softcover reprinting of that 1976 classic, *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection,* by Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $13.95). Here are 436 pages of essays on authors and their characters, with bibliographies, TV coverage, and filmographies in major entries.

I suppose there's a tiny subgenre of fiction about Jewish mothers, though it doesn't ordinarily extend to our environs. But in John Godey's *Fatal Beauty* (Atheneum, $14.95) we have Juno Sultan, who takes on the CIA, the FBI, two varieties of Italian terrorists, and Italian cops when her son is included in a terrorist kidnaping in Italy. The CIA, which employs its own acknowledged psychopath, is no more attractive than the Forze Scarlatti, earnest and dedicated bloodletters in the name of liberty as they are. So the dead accumulate as Juno—and a well matched Roman policeman called Orlandi—work their way to the hostages. This is at once a driving, twisting, grim, and fanciful tale.

Charles Paris, you'll remember, is that seldom-engaged British actor around whom corpses appear, and whose unintentional sleuthing method usually is to fix upon the wrong person as killer and, in pursuit of supporting evidence, to stumble across the truth. Latest in this very rewarding series is *Not Dead, Only Resting* (Scribners, $11.95) by Simon Brett. Here homicide visits the affairs of a homosexual club. Paris is emphatically not of that persuasion, but is asked to consider what melange of jealousies might have made death necessary. Or, in this arty world of sharply caught characters, could some other motive be operating?

Margaret Maron's debut (*One Coffee With*), also that of her sleuth, Lieutenant Sigrid Harald of the New York police, went under with the collapse of Harlequin's crime-fiction imprint, Raven Books. But both are back in *Death of a Butterfly* (Doubleday, $11.95). Harald is no stereotypical policewoman, so getting to know her a bit here is a pleasure. And her case is intriguing: someone killed a thoroughly nasty lady under circumstances which seem to exclude all possible suspects. The earlier murder of a jewel dealer and the fate of a three-year-old boy are somehow also involved. Maron has a nice sensitive touch.

The consistently enjoyable Amos Walker series by Loren D. Estleman continues with *Sugartown* (Houghton Mifflin, $13.95). This fifth novel has a Polish flavor, as Walker seeks traces of the long-lost grandson of Martha Evancek in an ethnic neighborhood of Detroit now preyed upon by bulldozers. The grandson was last known nineteen years before when, as a boy, he walked in on his father in the act of dispatching his mother, sister,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and self with a shotgun. A good private eye—and Amos is that—can pick up the trail quickly, but that nineteen-year-old murder has left a bad taste in Amos's mouth, and Martha has not yet told him all her story.

You could do far worse than follow the investigations of W. J. Burley's Inspector Charles Wycliffe, of which the eleventh is *Wycliffe and the Beales* (Doubleday, $11.95). Here the pleasure lies more in the richness of character exploration, the English village dynamics and interplay, and the fortunes of the Beale family than in the discovery of whodunit. The first to die in Washford is a dirty, illiterate handyman, executed with a bullet to the head. Motive is certainly not apparent, but links can be seen to the Beales, several generations of this merchant family huddled together in one dwelling and separated from the villagers by money, class, and religion. Wycliffe explores, listens to lies and truth and silence, watches, and finally comes to understand. Very well done.

© 1985 by Allen J. Hubin.

DETECTIVERSE

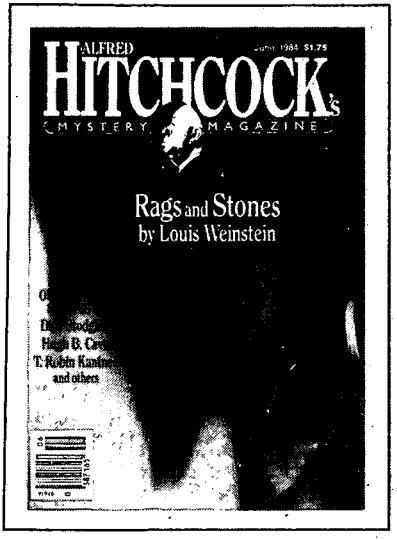
BEDTIME STORY

by STEVE SAMOYEDNY

Many's the night I stay up very late,
Trying to unravel a character's fate.
Is he a killer? A crook? Or a spy?
Or maybe, perhaps, just an everyday guy?
Totally engrossed, I turn every page—
As the action unfolds, my mind's now a stage.
I follow the clues with the masterful sleuth
And help him uncover and expose the truth.
The pages turn fast—we near the conclusion—
At five past one we nail down the solution.
As I grow sleepy and my eyes start to close,
Again I'm grateful it's a mystery I chose.

© 1985 by Steve Samoyedny.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
First-rate, spine-tingling tales of suspense guaranteed to thrill and perplex even the most sophisticated mystery buff.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
At least 130 pages of intriguing mystery fiction every month... plus a mysterious photograph contest, a puzzle and reviews. Be mesmerized by today's top authors. Watch out for cunning murders, intricate plots, and clues on every page. Subscribe today.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S
MYSTERY MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 1932 • Marion, Ohio 43306

Please send me 12 big issues for only $15.97,
a savings of $5.03 off the regular newsstand price of $21.00.

☐ Bill me ☐ Payment enclosed

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

DQF5HO

Or call toll-free 1-800-247-2160 (In Iowa call 1-800-362-2860)

Guarantee! If you are not completely satisfied with AHMM, you may cancel your subscription at any time & receive a full cash refund for all unmailed copies!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After reading Florence V. Mayberry's "In the Secret Hollow" (December 1973 EQMM), Agatha Christie wrote to Ellery Queen about "the profound impression" the story had made on her. It was, she told him, "a very remarkable tale and one on which Florence V. Mayberry should be congratulated."

Florence V. Mayberry's visionary stories have been impressing our readers since 1964, and this new one about Chris Langsted, forty-two, and the twenty-year-old Autumn should be no exception . . .

WIDOW?

by FLORENCE V. MAYBERRY

Chris and I met at Lake Tahoe. That was a long time ago when both Reno, where I lived, and Tahoe were simpler, less glittered with gambling and neons. Especially Tahoe. It was still woodsy and real, an outdoor place for swimming, horseback riding, Girl and Boy Scout camps—nightclubs only in the background. That day I was with a noisy young crowd from Nevada University, none of us particularly dating anybody, just a crowd of Christmas-holiday students.

I remember exactly what I wore. White ski pants, black fur-topped boots, a white angora sweater and cap. As I walked through the lobby to the fireplace after a morning of tramping in the snow, I looked in a mirror and was quite set up with myself. Tall, slender, pink cheeks, auburn hair waving into the white cap. I sat on the divan before the fire and began unlacing my boots, planning to toast my feet while waiting for our luncheon table to be called.

© 1985 by Florence V. Mayberry.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I hadn't noticed the man seated at the far end of an adjacent divan, but suddenly there was a swift movement and this stranger was kneeling before me, finishing the unlacing, pulling off the boot, smiling up at me, massaging my cold toes. "Do you mind?" he asked.

I was too startled to know whether I did or not. To my nineteen years, this man was very mature. Thirty-five, perhaps even forty. Forty-two, it turned out. No college boy I dated had ever paid attention to whether I had cold feet or not—other things were on their minds. And for sure none of them would have knelt before a girl, unless in horseplay. I hastily glanced around to see if any of my group saw us, but they hadn't yet come inside. Blood rushed into my cheeks as the second boot was loosened and the big warm hands of the stranger rubbed my toes. "I—I think I do," I said. Then, impulsively, "But it feels good."

"It would to me in your place," he said, and kept rubbing.

When my feet were good and warm, he returned to the other divan, sat down, and leaned forward, hands clasped between his knees. "My name is Christopher Langsted. I live in Reno. New, though—I'm only there a few weeks."

"I live there, too. I go to the University."

"And home? Where is that?"

"Fresno, California." I didn't have to say any more, but I did. "My mother lives there. My father lives in Winnemucca. They're divorced, both married again. But Dad wanted me to go to college in his native state. Mine, too. I was born in Reno." Silence constrained us while we contemplated the crackling fire, and each other. Then, why not? "Where's your home?" I asked him.

"Canada. British Columbia. But I've wandered a bit, lived in a great many places. Now it's Reno. I like it—it has mountains *and* prairie."

I laughed. "Not prairie—desert. We don't have prairies in Nevada."

He laughed with me. "I'm an ignorant foreigner, you'll have to—"

But what I had to do was lost as my gang crowded into the lobby and called for me to join them. "I guess our table is ready," I said. "Thank you for getting my feet warm."

"That was my pleasure," he said. Then, as I turned away, he caught my arm and said, "Forgive me, please. But when you first arrived this morning I saw you in the lobby, and I thought how delightful, but how impossible, it would probably be to meet such a lovely girl. But when you came in again just now and sat so near

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

me, it seemed providence. That's why I was so bold. It must have seemed very rude, but I would have hated myself if I lost that chance. Could I know your name?"

"Autumn," I told him. And blushed. "Honestly. I know it's a peculiar name. But I was born in autumn. With red hair. Like autumn leaves, my dad said. My mother preferred Dawn, because that's when I arrived—so that's my middle name."

"Your parents were very perceptive. It's a beautiful name."

That's how it started with Chris and me.

Just after the Christmas holiday a note addressed to "Miss Autumn Dawn" arrived at my dorm—a formal, polite note: "Dear Miss Autumn Dawn, I neglected to obtain your surname, but hope this will reach you. I took the precaution of attaching a separate note to the registrar stating that you are a tall, slender young woman with auburn hair. It would give me the greatest pleasure if you would have dinner with me this coming Friday night, or any night you choose. My telephone number is—."

I called him. Perhaps because he was so courteous, so intriguingly mature. Except for my father, he was the oldest man who had ever asked me out for dinner. And my dad didn't bother any more since he had remarried. But more likely it was because Chris was so good-looking—the tall, lean type I saw in British movies, the whole effect enhanced by his odd, clipped Canadian accent.

He looked so quietly sophisticated in his beautifully tailored suit as he waited for me in the dormitory lounge. The eyes of the girls sitting around widened and looked heavenward as they took sidewise glances at him, and I knew stacks of questions would greet me when I came home that night.

He helped me into the waiting taxi and we rode down South Virginia Road to one of Reno's best restaurants. I'd been there before with my father, and with one or two boy friends who had big allowances. But it was different with Chris. The way he ordered, talked, danced made me feel precious, elegant, romantic—rather like the girls in expensive perfume ads.

When he delivered me back to the dormitory, he didn't kiss me goodnight. He took my hand, told me how charming I was, and asked if my study program would permit a similar evening soon.

I said it would and started up the steps. Then on impulse I ran back to him, pulled his face close, kissed his cheek, and hurried inside. When I was in the foyer, I looked back. He still stood on the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

walk, as though waiting for me to return. Even now, when I think of Chris, that's the way I remember him. Waiting for me.

It was on our next date that Chris told me he was in Reno for a divorce that he wasn't sure his wife would give him. But if all went well, would I marry him?

He kissed me that night. Because I said I would.

At the end of his six weeks' stay in Reno, Chris explained that his wife refused to sign the divorce papers and he would have to return to Canada to reason with her, but I was not to worry because he planned to make a generous financial settlement. "The subject hasn't come up before, because you didn't ask. But I'm quite well off. My parents are both dead and I'm their only child. I have timber holdings and mills I'll sell out while I'm in Canada—there will be plenty of money for her and for us." He added in an off-hand way, "Even though she is a very greedy lady."

This was his first direct comment on his wife and I was curious. "What was your trouble, Chris?"

"Let's not talk about that, Sweet."

"Why not? I should know. To avoid doing the same wrong things and losing you, too."

He shook his head, an indulgent smile loosening his set expression. "Not you, Autumn. You're too open, too honest. And too loving."

But once started, I was determined to learn more about their trouble. "Chris, I'm not just prying. My own past is involved. My parents divorced just as I reached my teens—and I hated it. I still do. They both love me, I'm sure they do, but when they each remarried I was an outsider. I don't blame them, that's just how things happen. It's a relief to know you don't have children to be hurt as I was. Can't you understand how deeply I fear doing something that could lead to divorce? Please don't leave me in the dark."

So he told me. The problem was adultery. She didn't want a divorce because marriage is a good cover for short-term affairs. And she also liked money. Money and marriage formed her insurance policy, with marriage the more stable part of that policy. As she grew older, the affairs were harder to come by. She was less attractive and lonely old age loomed ahead. "She still has some beauty," he said, "but it's become hard-edged, somehow not real—not because of age, but because of the way she thinks and lives. I'll be honest, Autumn. Once I loved her a great deal. She was fascinating, lovely—a recent widow, eight years older than I, but very attractive to me. She resembled

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you, Autumn. Blue eyes, lovely skin, delicate features. Her hair was the same auburn shade. Later, as it began to grey and thin, she wore wigs, but they were always auburn. The color suited her as it does you. Now, please, Sweet, no more. The past is over for me. Let it be for you, too."

He left that week for British Columbia to finalize his divorce papers and was gone almost three months. When he returned, he was thinner, his face strained, silver beginning to show at his temples. He held me close, dropping his head against mine, almost as though too tired to hold it up. "It's finally settled, Autumn. Finished at last. As soon as the divorce is granted, we can be married."

He requested a closed hearing for the divorce to avoid publicity and insisted that I not be there. This was a relief. I didn't want to be there. Then, in Carson City, we were married the day after I received my degree from the university.

We chose Lake Tahoe for our honeymoon because we had met there and because Chris loved the mountains, trees, and lakes. It reminded him of the mountain property in British Columbia his father had given him while he was still in college. Chris had built a log cabin there for himself, even to the rock fireplace. The land was far from the highway, free of traffic, stores, and people—private and peaceful.

"Then why didn't you take me there instead of to Tahoe?" I asked him.

His face shadowed. "It's too soon. I don't want to think of any life before this one of ours."

I didn't press. I was too happy with what we had. Chris was tender and gentle—a younger father, an older and understanding lover, a gentleman who treated me like an honored guest in my own home.

We ended up with two houses, one rented at the Lake and one we bought, a charming old-fashioned house that overlooked the Truckee River in Reno.

In the fall, three years after we were married, Chris suddenly said, "Autumn, I think it's time we paid a visit to my—to our cabin in British Columbia. Do you think you can stand at least part of a Canadian winter? Snow gets heavy up there."

I was happy as a child. "It sounds wonderful! Oh, Chris, I've longed to see the cabin! Let's really stock up and be snowed in all winter! How soon can we leave?"

"As soon as you can get ready. You'll need all your snow things,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and you'll need to shop. But don't bring blankets, there are plenty there. No electric blankets—there's no electricity at the cabin, just oil lamps. We can buy basic supplies at the country store about twenty miles away."

As we drove north, I grew more and more excited, entranced with the beauty of the northern country. Lakes edged with pine and fir trees spiked into the blue sky as though trying to catch the puffball clouds. Deer darted across the highway. There was a hardy simplicity in the people we met at gasoline and food stops. And the air was so clean and pure and exhilarating. I wanted us to live here always.

Deep in British Columbia, we turned off the highway onto a narrow road strewn with pine needles and started climbing up the mountain, our car seeming to twist upon itself as we followed the unrelenting sharp curves, up and up, the air thinning into winey sharpness. Miles down the highway, we had stopped at a small trading center to stock up on supplies, including kerosene for the lamps. "We'll have to hurry, even though these curves are tricky," Chris said. "The sun goes down early this far north." But even driving faster, my first sight of the log cabin was sheathed in twilight and by the time we carried everything indoors, the sky was dark except for the moon appearing and disappearing in the shifting clouds.

Chris lighted the lamps on the stone mantle above the fireplace and the broad pine kitchen table and hurried out again to search out fallen tree branches for our fire. He was elated, more boyish than I had ever seen him. I couldn't help it—I wondered if the elation came from remembering previous times here with his first wife. This had been hers, too—she must have been here with him. Perhaps even that last time three years ago when he had returned about the divorce.

I shook my head to banish the nagging thoughts. But I wondered if similar thoughts had troubled Chris while he was outside, because when he returned with an armload of wood he was no longer elated but quiet and pensive. Unspoken strain held both of us until the fire blazed in the fireplace, the little iron cookstove was hot, and coffee bubbled in a granite pot. Then the strain vanished. We began to laugh and chatter about everything in the cabin. I rubbed my hands admiringly over the varnished dark-yellow logs of the wall, carried a lamp into the compact bedroom, set it on a built-in chest, and lifted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the thick Hudson Bay blankets stacked on the bunks. Chris shook out the narrow mattresses and reached his long arms across them to spread out the sheets we had brought with us. I dusted the furniture, hung our clothes in the cedar-lined closet, planned where I might hang pictures, curtains I might make.

We cooked supper and after the dishes were washed Chris drew me into his arms. "This is the way it always should have been," he whispered, his cheek against mine. His voice was taut, covering more than he said. He eased us into the big lounge chair before the fire. "I've been afraid to bring you here—afraid it wouldn't turn out right. But it is right. You've driven away the past, Autumn darling. She'll never come back."

I pushed off his lap. "You're still thinking about her! It's this cabin—you didn't do that in Reno! I won't stay here. You're not fair. You don't want to tell me about her, yet you keep thinking about her. Was it here in this cabin that you finally broke up? If it is, I hate it. I want to go home!"

His eyes went wide and sick. He stared at me a few moments, then arose, took his jacket from a wooden hook beside the outer door, and went into the dark night.

My tempers come fast and leave the same way. By the time he had left the deck that bordered the cabin and the crunch of his steps on the needle-covered ground became faint, I was sorry. I grabbed my sweater and ran after him, calling, "Chris, I didn't mean it! I'm sorry!"

I waited in the dark outside the cabin, lamplight from the small paned windows intensifying the black forms of the trees and the intimidating immensity of the mountain beyond them. Utter loneliness crowded in on me. "I'm frightened, Chris!" I screamed. "I'm *so* sorry! Please come back!"

When he appeared out of the sheltering trees, he hurried to me, held me close, kissed me, and said, "Sweet, I'm the one to be sorry. I shouldn't have mentioned—anything at all. We'll leave tomorrow, never return."

But in the morning the sun was bright, the sky so blue, the air so sweet and clear, I couldn't bear to leave and go back to the noise and brittleness of Reno. So Chris had memories. Who didn't? Together we would build our own memories in this lovely place.

It was like being newlyweds all over again, to nest in the snug cabin. I busied myself inside while Chris sought out fallen trees,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sawed and split their trunks and branches, stacked firewood up the side of the cabin. "When snow comes, the wood beside the house will insulate it, help keep it warm. If I chop enough, we could last out the winter."

"What about food?"

"Oh, we probably *won't* stay. But if we should, there's always the store down the highway. If the car can't get out, I can snowshoe to the main road and catch a ride. The highway is kept clear."

Frost began to show around the window edges and one morning Chris said the clouds meant snow and he had better drive to the store for supplies. "Want to come along?" he asked.

I can't remember why I said no. Perhaps I feared we'd soon leave the cabin to avoid a snowbound winter and I wanted to hoard every minute of being in it. And Chris was so efficient, he didn't need my help with the shopping. Whatever the reason, I decided to stay and felt quite exhilarated by the prospect of a cozy day puttering about, perhaps exploring spots around the cabin I hadn't yet seen.

"I should be back by mid-afternoon or so. Are you sure you'll be all right? I haven't seen any wild animals around, but if a bear should show up run for the house and lock the door. It's too bad you don't know how to use the rifle."

"What rifle?"

"The one in the trunk of the car. In these mountains you never know when one might come in handy. Maybe I should give you a quick run-through, show you how to use it. If you did shoot something, we could hang it in the cache—you'd be a real pioneer lady."

I gave a feminine shudder and told him to keep his old rifle, I'd never shoot an animal.

The cache, actually, had been a problem for me when on the morning after our arrival Chris had pointed it out and explained its purpose. It was a small shedlike structure to one side of the cabin, built on top of four tall poles. Once Chris had spent an entire year here and had shot a deer for meat. He'd hung the carcass in the cache, where it stayed frozen through the winter, the tall poles keeping hungry animals from reaching it. My reaction was, the poor deer, the poor hungry animals—never mind the hungry man, there was a store down the road.

As he waved and drove away down the narrow, rutted road I thought how miraculously fortunate I was to have him appear out of nowhere and fall in love with me. Of *course* his first wife wouldn't have wanted to let him go—especially once her affairs were no longer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so enticing and she was older. What kind of persuasion had he used to get her to finally release him? Money, he'd said—a great deal of money. But wouldn't she have had the money anyway even if she refused the divorce? Perhaps—could it be?—she had at last truly fallen in love with one of the men she was involved with.

What kind of woman was she, anyway? She resembled me, Chris had said. The eyes, the hair. She'd kept the hair color after she became grey by wearing a wig. Did I really look like her? Curiosity gnawed at me. If only I could find a photograph of her, left behind somewhere in the cabin. Things were always left behind after vacations. Impelled by the desire to know what she looked like, I started pulling out drawers, running my hand into crevices in the bedroom cupboards, even crawling under the bunks to feel the grooves in the log walls.

Finding nothing in the main cabin, I tackled the lean-to storeroom off the kitchen and dug through old packing boxes, castoff luggage, every nook and cranny of every shelf. Finally, a little ashamed of the clandestine search, I gave up.

The cabin was neat and sunlight had begun to brighten the lean-to window. The clouds were gone, the day had warmed. It would be lovely outdoors. Perhaps I could find dry grasses for bouquets.

As I left the cabin, my attention was caught by a tall ladder lying against one wall. I thought of the cache where Chris had kept the deer. It was a curiosity—I had never heard of one before this trip. Why not climb up and see what it was like inside? I dragged the ladder outside, steadied it against the floor of the small shed, climbed up, and peered through its narrow opening. Repulsed by a rank animal smell, I nevertheless continued looking into the shadowy interior.

In a far corner was a small mound—a small motionless animal, its shape and color barely discernible in the faint light. I shuddered, pitying the poor dead thing. It must have shinnied up a pole in search of food and then died, too timid to retreat, or frozen by winter.

Still staring at the creature, repelled but fascinated, I moved down a rung. Then the back of my neck tightened with irrational fear. The animal had hair nearly the color of my own. Dulled, yes, and dirty, but unmistakeably reddish. Could it be a fox? Part of a fox? But can a fox climb up a pole? No. A domestic cat, perhaps, strayed and hungry. I hastened back down the ladder, eager for the clean, cozy cabin and a cup of tea.

But as my feet touched the ground, another thought held me

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

motionless. A long narrow green cloth had been beside the animal. Too wide for a pet's decorative neck ribbon. A scarf. Why would a green scarf be beside a dead cat? To wrap it for burial? Would a man be likely to do that? No, but a woman might. What woman? Chris's first wife, of course. But why put the pet in the cache instead of burying it?

I scurried up the ladder again and this time crawled across the straw-littered floor to the animal. I gingerly poked its fur with one finger. Dried dark-brown drippings streaked the dull red of its pelt. Blood, old blood. The poor thing had been badly injured. I picked it up by a hair tuft—and dropped it in horror. It was no animal! It was a tousled wig, matted with blood that once had poured through a gash in the wig's webbing. The green scarf half under the wig was also splotched with dried blood.

I dropped the hideous thing, backed onto the ladder and down to the ground. In mute hysteria, I ran into the forest and clung to a tall pine in a miserable effort to squeeze comfort from a natural, living thing.

Then I realized how foolish it was to be frightened by my own fertile imagination. There was sure to be a perfectly natural explanation for the red wig. Chris's wife could have left it behind, Chris never wanted to see it again, and tossed it into the rubbish. *And the wig climbed into the cache?* An animal attracted by the blood found it and carried it there. *But how did the blood get on the wig?* Perhaps two animals found it, fought, wounded each other, and bled. Their teeth had gashed the wig. *Then one animal carried the hairy, fleshless thing up one of the poles into the cache?*

My head whirled from the futile conjecture. I decided that when Chris returned, I would simply ask him about it.

It was nearly dark when Chris arrived, the car filled with groceries and packages. "Hi, Sweet! Miss me?" I ran to the car, eager for his tenderness and strength. "Oh, Chris, I did! I should have gone with you—it was horrible here alone, imagining scary things."

He swept me in his arms and held me, then asked me to help him carry the lighter stuff inside. In the house, he began rattling around with the stove. "Let's have some tea. You probably didn't eat all day. I didn't, either. But I picked up a lot of good things—we'll have a wonderful supper."

He was so normal, so comforting. I laughed, relieved, and sent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him back to the car to pick up the rest of the things while I started supper.

After our meal, we settled before the fireplace and I brought up the episode of the cache.

"Today was a bad day, Chris. I was silly and broody. It's so good to have you home, to make me sensible. I do, sometimes, have too much imagination. But to be fair, Chris, part of what upset me today is your fault. You've been so secretive about your first wife. You've never even told me her first name. Not that it truly matters, but it leaves me feeling shut out and curious. Too curious, I suppose."

The firelight showed his face grow taut and I hurried on before he could stop me. "So today I looked for some trace of her. For a photograph or something that could give me a hint of what she was like. You said we looked alike. That her wigs were the same color as my hair."

His inward withdrawal became an inverse force, pushing me away from him. "Please don't stop listening, Chris—let me get this off my mind. Help me not to imagine something that isn't true—about what might have happened between you when you came back to Canada to talk about your divorce."

He stood abruptly. "Why do you continue prying? She's gone! She's out of our lives forever! We've been married three happy years. Why destroy that? Isn't it enough that I've adored you from the instant I first saw you? That life would mean nothing to me without you? Leave my past alone! It doesn't belong to you!"

"But *you* do," I said determinedly. "Everything about you, even your past. And this afternoon I found an auburn wig up in the cache. With dried blood on it." I stood and took his shoulder. "What happened, Chris? Did you argue? Did she fall against something, gash her head? Was the wig tossed in the rubbish and did an animal carry it away? A little animal that could climb the poles? How did it get there?"

He pushed me away. "Are you suggesting I killed her?"

I began to weep, stricken. "No, no! How could that be? She signed the divorce papers—you brought them back with you. That's how you got your divorce. But the wig—I couldn't help thinking something violent had to have happened. And it was so strange for the wig to be in—" I stopped, thinking: *a place where meat is kept, dead meat.*

His face congealed, like something dead itself. Without a word,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he turned and walked outside. I started to follow, then stopped, believing he'd had too much of me for now, that he needed to regain his composure.

I sat, trembling, before the fire, getting up from time to time to add a log to keep it going. Almost an hour went by.

Frightened, I couldn't wait longer. I ran outside into the close-growing trees, calling his name. The spiney branches seemed to entrap my voice, muffle it. I turned back to the cabin, found a flashlight, and returned to the forest.

As a last resort, I got the car keys and drove slowly to the highway, stopping intermittently to shout his name. At the highway I stopped, uncertain. Should I turn toward the store, tell them my husband had run away from me, or try to find a phone box on the highway? Who would I telephone? My father? My mother? Say that my husband, whom they didn't know very well, had left me because he thought I'd accused him of murder? The police? No, that was worse. It would stir up a nasty inquiry, create a notoriety Chris would hate even more than that he'd dreaded about his divorce.

I decided to let him resolve the situation in his own way and not make it worse than I already had. I drove back to the cabin, hoping desperately to find him already there, worried about me, ready to talk.

But he wasn't there, and all that night he didn't return.

In the morning, the wig and scarf were still in the cache and I vowed never again to mention them to anyone, even to Chris. The sky was overcast as I searched the woods again, and in the afternoon a light snow fell. I retreated to the cabin, careful to note any other human footprints than mine. There were none.

The snowfall ceased in the night and in the morning I could see indentations where I had walked, but still no other footprints. One more day, I promised myself. Then I'll leave for Reno.

Deep that night, I awakened. My eyes remained closed as I listened to the capricious creaking that houses make by themselves in the night. I could hear the faint scurry of a small animal outside on the window ledge. I heard, too, my rapid, shallow breathing—roo rapid, too shallow.

I struggled to lift my eyelids and couldn't. I tried to raise my arms, to thrust aside the blankets which seemed intolerably heavy. Will as I might, my arms refused to move. My breath was getting short. Frightened, I struggled with the air itself, trying to force it into my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

constricted lungs. Was I paralyzed—was this a stroke brought on by anxiety? Surely not—I was too young, too healthy.

Smothering darkness crept up my body, up my neck, trying to capture my brain. This had to be a bad dream, not reality. But through quivering eyelids I could see moonlight shining through the window, the dark outlines of the chair with my clothes over its back where it stood near the window. My numbed lips mouthed at the air, trying to suck it into my starving lungs. I was awake, and I was dying.

Then great, gasping relief. Chris was there, standing beside the bunk. He bent close. I tried to force my paralyzed body into action, to cry out for help—beg him to lift me, put my feet on the floor, walk me back to life.

But he only stood there, not touching me. Chill emanated from him. He has wandered too long in the cold, I thought. "You found out," he said, his voice tired and flat. "And that killed me."

It's a nightmare—I'm asleep. Oh God, wake me, help me!

"I had to die after you found out," his empty voice said. "Only dying didn't solve anything. I thought I could just leave you, enter into emptiness. Nothingness. But that's not the way it is. I still exist—alone, in a void of loneliness. No one but me. That's the nothingness. I can't endure it, Autumn. I need you. You must come with me."

No! my mind shrieked. In an agony of panic, I tried to move.

"You must," his monotonous voice repeated. "I love you. I need you."

Did you murder her? I asked soundlessly.

"I suppose so. I didn't mean to, but we quarreled. She kept saying I would never be free. And I had to be free. To marry you. First I hid her in the cache. Then I took her far into the mountains. She will never be found—I know these mountains well. I told everyone she was upset about the divorce and had left Canada for good."

His presence became more ominous as he seemed to lean close to my face, willing the remnants of my breath to vanish. Even the darkness with its moonlit shadows began receding into nothingness. Terror crescendoed into heat, and the heat transformed into a flame of anger. Would he kill two wives? One through living strength, one through the magnetism of death? The anger burned through me and the tip of the little finger on my right hand quivered, the quiver strengthening through the entire hand.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Lie still, Sweet," he whispered. "Don't resist. Come to me. A few moments and we will be together."

If you're dead, where is your body? my brain asked.

"You will never know—not in your world."

My right hand clenched and unclenched. Nerves stabbed up my arm, shooting electricity through my body, and I sat up as though catapulted. I moved to the edge of the bunk, swayed forward, and fell to the floor, drenched with icy sweat. "Chris!" I gasped, my hands groping in the darkness. No object obstructed them. I stood, fumbled for the matches, lighted the lamp.

"Chris!"

He wasn't there.

I threw on my robe and ran from the cabin, crying his name again and again. No answer. So it was a nightmare—it had to be a nightmare, ridiculous, abnormal, a miasma from my own subconscious.

But I had seen the window, the moonlight, the chair. The struggle for breath had been all too real. I had heard the skittering animal outside. I had been awake. Not lucid, perhaps, but awake.

I returned to the cabin and packed my belongings. When daylight came, I climbed one last time to the cache. Hating its touch, I carried the wig to the cookstove and burned it, forever destroying evidence of my terrible suspicion. When the flames died, I dampened the ashes, picked up my travel cases, and carried them to the car. Hesitantly, I opened the trunk. If a rifle had been there, as Chris had said, it was gone.

I loaded the suitcases inside, closed the trunk, and drove down the mountain road, onto the highway headed for the States and Reno. My head throbbed with nagging questions.

Can ghosts return? Can the dead threaten the living? Would Chris follow me to Reno?

As I said, that was a long time ago. I'm still in Reno. I was born here and it was the easiest place for me to get a job. Or to be in case Chris should come back—where he can find me, even if he is only a ghost.

That is, if there was a ghost. Neither Chris nor his wife were ever found. The police searched—I asked them to. They traveled all over the mountain range but no trace of bodies were discovered. So they settled on the theory that Chris and his wife are both in some foreign, lost place, she because she wants Chris and Chris to avoid a charge of bigamy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Because Chris never got a divorce. There were no signed divorce papers. There was no closed-court hearing for me not to be present at. Oh, there was a wedding in Carson City, all right, I've got the license.

The question is, does it count?

If his wife was murdered, it does. I'm a widow.

If she wasn't, I'm not.

Since I'm the one involved, you might think I'd have reached a firm conclusion.

Sorry. I can't.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Next time you see a tree, say thanks.

Thanks
- books and pencils
ıd paper, thanks for wood to
ıild our homes and firewood
keep us cozy in them, thanks
- violins and cellos and
itars, thanks for furniture
ıd paints and paintbrushes,
anks for maple syrup and
eds, thanks for park benches
ıd gymnasium floors, thanks
- fruits and jams and jellies,
anks for shade for a Sunday
ternoon nap, and a special

thanks for the oxygen we breathe. Trees give us a lot. Don't take them for granted. Please be careful with fire in the forest. A tree will thank you.

Only you can prevent forest fires.

blic Service of This Magazine & The Advertising Council

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* Bickenton story by

ROBERT P. MILLS

The phone call for Chief Bain was from Reverend Kalmus. Seemed that during the storm the night before somebody had broken into the poor box and left it empty except for one thin dime, which he must have missed in the dark. And the Reverend knew there must have been quite a few bills in it because he'd seen several of his parishioners put bills in it with his own eyes . . .

VILLAINY IN THE VILLAGE

by ROBERT P. MILLS

Police Chief Bain permitted himself a little whistling—a few bars of "Goin' Down to the Railroad Maybe By and By"—as he moved about the kitchen preparing lunch. It had been a dark and stormy night, but now the sun was bright, and he had run into no serious problems during the storm in his peaceful village of Bickenton. There had been one fallen wire that could have caused trouble—a tree had fallen on it and snapped it, and if anybody had fooled around with it fatality could have resulted. But Andy Charlton had noticed it while driving by in his red panel truck and had helped the Chief block it off until the Utilities Company had taken care of it.

Andy had a funny sense of humor, had been found guilty of the occasional practical joke, but he was, the Chief thought, basically a helpful cuss. The Chief had spoken to Andy's father about one of those practical jokes and Max had promised to speak to the young man and asked if the Chief was going to arrest him.

"Can't hardly arrest him for making Laszlo look a little silly, can I?" Chief Bain asked. "I mean, one red stripe on the church because Andy switched red paint for white in Laszlo's paint bucket isn't exactly a felony. But you got to stop him embarrassing people like

© *1985 by Robert P. Mills.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that—it makes it look as though I'm not maintaining law and order properly."

"I can sure see that and I'll talk to him strongly," Max said with steely determination. "I was arrested once and I didn't like it—sure wouldn't want that to happen to Andy."

"Well, now," the Chief said, interest quickening in his crime-hunting soul, "I don't remember you mentioning having been a jailbird before—sort of thing I ought to know."

"Happened quite a while ago," Max said soothingly, "and I didn't spend any time in jail. See, I used to be a researcher. I specialized in cloning techniques and made a big breakthrough. The government heard about it and hired me to go work in a little research community up in Maine. And what we did was we found a way to clone an adult. First one we did was the director, and he put his clone behind his desk and went off to play golf every day."

"Now I *like* that idea. Can you do it for me?"

"Oh, no—I threw away all my notes after what happened." Max looked righteous. "See, we all wanted our own clones so we could loaf, too, and when we had 'em all made, we threw a bring-your-own-clone party. And it turned out *my* clone was a foul-mouthed lush. He drank down three martinis very fast and began talking loud and dirty. There were ladies there and I didn't want them mixing that bum up with *me*, so I got him out of there fast. Drove him homeward on the ocean road and stopped at a lookout point above a vertical cliff. Told him there was a woman across the bay who got undressed in front of an open window every night about this time and if he came over to the edge he could see."

"Just where is this bay?" the Chief asked sternly.

"Restricted information," Max told him regretfully. "Anyhow, when he got to the edge I pushed him over the cliff. About ninety feet down there, and I figured when the tide came in the hungry fingers of the sea would carry him out to the deeps. Went home, poured myself a glass of fine brandy, and had settled down with a new Eric Ambler thriller when the doorbell rang. Turned out to be a police sergeant and a constable. 'Max Charlton?' the sergeant asked. When I admitted I was, he told me I was under arrest, had the right to remain silent and all that stuff."

Max tugged at his collar. "I asked him what I was charged with and he said, 'You are charged, sir, with making an obscene clone fall.'

"Turned out the charge came under a subsection of the law against

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beach-littering and I got fined twenty dollars. But the whole thing taught me a lesson, and I quit the cloning business and got into brass."

Chief Bain looked at Max, eyes narrowed, for some time, then said, "Well, now, I guess I can overlook that, though it's not easy. And I begin to see where some of Andy's problems may come from."

In his kitchen, Chief Bain shook his head ruefully as he remembered how Max had him going along with him for some time with that story. He stopped whistling, began his version of singing. "When the train comes along, I'm goin' to snatch it back . . ." He opened a can of scungilli, which Baird's General Store had apparently gotten in by mistake, and thought that was a funny name for conch. But he liked conch and was going to have some good spaghetti for himself, by George, if his theory worked out. He figured to simmer the juice from the can along with chopped onions, parsley, thyme, some white wine, and a large chunk of butter, put in the conch meat just long enough to get it warm, and dump it all on some linguine—and if it worked, he'd be eating a better lunch than Max Charlton, he'd bet.

His son, Seth, it not being a school day, had bounced out of bed early without being yelled at, eaten cold cereal more than likely, and gone off on his bike the Lord knew where. He wouldn't appreciate conch anyhow, probably, the way he loved hot dogs. And just as the timer went off to say that the linguine was ready, the phone rang.

It was Reverend Kalmus from that church Laszlo had just finished painting, and he was really agitated. Seemed that during the storm somebody had broken into the poor box and left it empty except for one thin dime, which he must have missed in the dark. And the Reverend knew there must have been quite a few bills in it because he'd seen several of his parishioners put bills in it with his own eyes.

The Chief drained the linguine, poured the sauce over it, and hoped warming it in a double boiler would work.

The Reverend was waiting outside when the Chief arrived and began talking before the Chief was out of his car. "Chief Bain, this is a dreadful crime! I find it impossible to believe that a member of my flock would have done such a thing, yet who else would have known there was enough money in the box to make breaking and entering worthwhile?"

"Well, now," the Chief said in what he hoped was a soothing way,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"it's not exactly breaking and entering, since the thief didn't walk into that box, but I agree it's a heinous crime and that's why I'm here—to catch the perpetrator. Can you tell me anything that might assist me in my investigation?"

Chief Bain watched quite a few crime shows on television—all in the line of duty, as he saw it—and figured he'd picked up the lingo pretty convincingly. He was confident the Reverend would realize he was dealing with a professional crime-buster here.

"I can't think of anything to tell you, Chief," the Reverend said despairingly. "I was in the manse next door and I was on the phone talking to my daughter Nancy about trouble she was having with her car—I do sometimes wish she'd get married to a man who knows something about taking *care* of a car, and listen to him—when the storm came. I hung up then and began closing windows. I did see, come to think of it, a car go by, but it was raining so hard I couldn't see it very well. Looked dark-colored, but in the rain, and black as it was outside, I couldn't tell for sure. And then this morning when I came over here a little after eleven, I discovered what had happened. It's a terrible disgrace, sir, and I shan't be able to sleep until you find the miscreant."

Chief Bain looked thoughtful. "Let's go back a little. You say you saw the parishioners putting money in the box. When was that?"

"The evening before last. We had a special service in memory of the Reverend Percival Doomuch, who was our first minister and made the church what it is today. And it seemed to me that almost everybody put something in the box, many of them as I told you putting in bills. I remember Mrs. Bickening in particular, because she put in what I clearly saw to be a five-dollar bill with a smear of red ink on the corner. Her husband saw it, too, as a matter offact, and I heard him say to her, 'That much?' And she said, 'Reverend Doomuch was a saint—I can do no less in his memory.' "

Just then a passing car tooted, and the Chief saw it was Andy Charlton. He held up his hand, signaling Andy to stop, and walked over to him. Andy turned down his quadraphonic speakers, leaned out the window, and said, "Hi, there."

"Hi, Andy," the Chief responded. "Say, you were driving around last night I know—did you see any cars around here?"

"Gee, let me think." Andy scratched his head. "There weren't many cars out, but come to think of it I did see one, coming from this direction. He had his bright lights on, though, so I couldn't see who it was. I thought it might have been Mr. Bickening because he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never dims his lights, even for an oncoming car. He claims he doesn't see very well and has to keep them up. But I don't know if it was him."

The Chief nodded. "Thanks, Andy. Oh, and when you see your father you might tell him I've been thinking about his arrest record, but I haven't really decided what to do about it."

Andy gave the Chief a big grin. "He got you on that one, did he? I'll tell him he should have kept his mouth shut."

Chief Bain went back to the Reverend, noticing on his way the very faint shadow of that covered-over red stripe that was Andy's fault, and said, "I'm going to do some investigating around the village, Reverend, and I'll let you know what I turn up. I sure don't like this kind of thing happening in Bickenton!"

From there he went directly to see Mr. Bickening.

Mr. Bickening was a short, square man with wispy greying hair, a wispy darker moustache, and a ruddy face. That ruddiness always surprised the Chief because Mr. Bickening was rarely seen out in the sun. The Bickening living room was comfortably furnished, with the exception of the phony grandfather clock in the corner. Phony because it was a modern replica, and worse than that it was electrified.

"What can I do for you, Chief?" asked Mr. Bickening. "Mrs. Bickening went off to New Haven yesterday to visit her mother, who's been ailing. Is there anything I can help you with?"

"Well, now," the Chief said, "I was wondering if you were out in the storm last night—and if you were, did you notice anything?"

"No, Chief, I was right here, working on my book. Got a whole chapter done on it. It's called *A Sociological and Ethnic Study of the Potato Farmers of Eastern Long Island*. I think it's going to cause quite a stir when it's published. Tells some pretty startling things. Here, let me show you."

He turned and led the way into a den off the living room, where he pointed to a new-looking word processor. "That machine is a beauty," he said proudly. "These are the pages I did last night. See how neat they are?"

The Chief riffled through the pages, saw they were indeed neat, and noted the last page was numbered fourteen. "That's quite a few pages. How long did it take you?" he asked.

"Let's see. I started about seven-thirty and quit just after midnight. Five and a half hours?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"More like four and a half I would judge," said the Chief, who prided himself on his quick mathematical mind.

Just then the regrettable grandfather clock began chiming the hour, chiming in what the Chief thought was a curiously muted tone, having had his ears offended by the brassy banging of the clock before. And it went on chiming ten times. "That clock sounds a little funny to me," he said. "Something wrong with it?"

"Oh, really? You think so? Well—" Mr. Bickening seemed a little upset, and his wispy moustache quivered a bit, which created an interesting effect, Chief Bain noted.

Just then the noon siren down at the Bickenton Volunteer Firemen's House began to keen. The Chief looked at his watch to confirm that it was indeed noon and not a fire the siren was announcing, then he said, "I'd like to look at that clock."

He strode purposefully back into the living room and directly to the clock. He opened the glass-front door and reached inside, searching for the striker. And, nestled next to the striker, he found what he had expected—a plastic bag stuffed with something soft. Dumping out the contents, he saw before him many crumpled bills, including one five-dollar bill with a red-ink smear at the corner, and a number of coins.

Chief Bain turned to Mr. Bickening, who was noticeably less ruddy now and whose moustache was quivering uncontrollably.

"Mr. Bickening, your clock struck ten when the noon siren went off, which tells me your electricity was off last night when some of the wires were down. You apparently didn't notice that, because you didn't reset the clock. Which would indicate that you weren't here while the electricity was off. And that, together with the fact that you said you had been using your electric word processor while the power was off proves that you lied to me. And here in front of me is evidence of where you really were—down at the church robbing the poor box. You, sir, are the perpetrator I've been looking for."

The man before him was quivering all over now, guilt written plain on his face. It occurred to Chief Bain that, unlike Max Charlton and his clone, Mr. Bickening carried the bad along with the good inside himself, and he wondered how much good there really was in a man who could be guilty of such despicable behavior.

But not wishing to be too cruel in his judgment, Chief Bain contented himself with saying, "Mr. Bickening, you're sickening!"

And thus justice once more was done in the fair village of Bickenton.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* short story by

ROBERT BARNARD

Elsewhere in this issue, Isaac Asimov tells of a man trying to find the right hotel room. Here we have a woman finding the wrong one—with far-reaching consequences . . .

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by ROBERT BARNARD

"Jeremy Fortescue?" said Janice's mother in a voice shrill with horror. "You most certainly are not engaged to Jeremy Fortescue! The man's a fornicator, a child-molester, and a drunkard!"

"Not *that* Jeremy Fortescue," said Janice.

It certainly was not. The well known Jeremy Fortescue had become a British international film star in the late 'sixties—an exciting image to suit the dangerous tastes of the time: square of shoulder, shirt open to the navel, a mocking smile on his lips that seemed both to invite women and to despise them for their inevitable fall. Byron's was the name most often invoked to describe both his persona and his private life, which, as chronicled in the tabloids, suggested ruthlessness combined with an insatiable appetite for outré experience.

Janice's Jeremy Fortescue, the little known one, was something in insurance, and not anything very interesting in insurance at that. He was, on the other hand, a pudgy but likeable young man and Janice's mother was soon quite happy about the engagement, though Janice's Jeremy always imagined that she looked at him hard whenever he took a second drink, and imagined the other vices following in the train of drunkenness.

Even after five or six years of marriage, Janice found that she had nothing much to complain of in the drink, fornication, or child-mo-

© 1985 by Robert Barnard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lesting lines: the odd fumble at the office party, a *possible* dirty weekend away that she would like to be more sure about before she brought it up during a disagreement—these were very mild bumps on the highway of a marriage. Really they were very happy. Children could wait until they were both more settled. Janice had a job with a local doctor, was active in the Conservative Association, and a keen tennis player. Added to which she was, as she put it, "very much involved in things."

Janice's mother had all her life been a great letter-writer and the trait had descended to Janice. These were letters to council offices, firms, official bodies, national politicans: letters of complaint, protest, warning, and admonishment. They were public-spirited letters, concerned letters. The tone of Janice's was more reasonable than her mother's: you could do an awful lot, she always said, if you kept the correspondence pleasant. She was not a busybody—she merely thought that people should do their job and provide the services they promised.

She found something out quite early in her career of public usefulness: she got much better results if she signed those letters Mrs. Jeremy Fortescue. Mere Janice Fortescue would be treated politely enough by the bodies to which she had complained, but Mrs. Jeremy Fortescue got results. Heaven knows what the feminist movement would say, she often said with a wry smile, but if it got streetlamps fixed or proper policing in dangerous areas, well, wasn't it worth it? Janice loved to be able to point to results.

She also, as it happened, liked to get good service. And, after all, there was nothing *wrong* in using that form in personal matters as well, was there? When all was said and done, it *was* her name—that usage was perfectly all right and had been very frequent twenty or thirty years ago. And if a complaint to a shop or a ring to a plumber brought better service when you said "Mrs. Jeremy Fortescue," then why not say it? Janice knew her own mind, easily sorted out her moral priorities. She often chaired meetings of the Bridgehead Conservative Association and, young as she was, a lot of members thought of her as a bit of a tartar.

It was as deputy chairman of the Association that she went to Matching one spring in the late seventies. The occasion was the spring meeting of the Conservative Associations of the Southwest—not a terribly important meeting, but since the chairman had another engagement Janice thought she'd like to go. Politics was about meet-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing people, wasn't it, so it seemed silly not to seize the opportunity. Matching was a lovely old town, and she looked it up in the AA book and telephoned for a room in the best hotel. This wasn't graft: she was paying for it herself. One did in the Bridgehead Conservative Association.

When she arrived in Matching, she felt pleased with herself for her decision and walked from the station through the lovely old town on a wave of euphoria. When she caught sight of the Prince Frederick, a little off from the town center on a little square that had once been the market, she was pleased with her choice of hotel: it was a cool spacious Eighteenth Century establishment that seemed to exhale the atmosphere of a more leisurely era. She put down her little suitcase just to take in the elegant expanse of its frontage. Then she took it up again and marched confidently on and up to Reception.

"I have a room booked for the night."

"Yes, Madam. What name?"

"Mrs. Jeremy Fortescue."

"Oh, yes, of course, Madam. Five-oh-nine. Here we are. I do hope you'll find everything to your satisfaction, Madam."

Janice took the key, marched to the lift, and pressed the button for the fifth floor. How nice to be away for a time on one's own. Springy of step, she marched down the corridor and opened the door of 509.

"Hel-lo. What can I do for you?"

Janice had met her destiny, had had the encounter which her years of petty deceptions had been leading up to. Room 509 was in fact a most splendid suite, and he was standing by the door to the bathroom, glass in hand, close brown curly hair grown long over the collar, and dazzling white shirt open to the navel in a style that by now must have been second nature to him, so that to do up a few buttons would have seemed like being overdressed.

"Or could it be what would you care to do for me?" he added, with a dangerous yet somehow nervous smile.

"Oh, dear—how silly. *Awfully* sorry. I must have got the wrong room," said Janice, pink with embarrassment, backing away, and screwing her head round to look at the door.

"Hotel keys don't usually open more than one room," Jeremy Fortescue pointed out. "What number is your key?"

"Five-oh-nine. Look, there must be some mistake—"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Must be. But why rush to correct it? You haven't told me your name."

"Janice. Janice Fortescue."

"Well, there you are."

"Yes. I'm afraid so."

"They thought you were my wife."

"Yes."

"At least you recognize me. That's half the battle. Now what will you have to drink?"

"No, really. I ought to tell them—"

"All the time in the world. Now what will it be? Gin and tonic? Vodka and lime?"

By this time he was very close to her. Closer than she would have liked. Or, to put it more accurately, too close for comfort. It was, really, a very exciting body: the shoulders certainly were broad, the chest wonderfully hairy, and the whole splendidly brown for an English April. And if his manner was the cheap seducer's (she told herself determinedly, though in fact she had known very few cheap seducers), still it was tense, nervous—almost neurotic in its intensity, which made her think of herself as a *need* rather than as a victim. His face, close to, was haggard, the eyes almost rimmed. His hands were not exactly shaking, yet they were not still, either. That might be incipient alcoholism, of course, but there was little alcohol on his breath. He behaved like a man who had just been through a shattering experience, or perhaps was just anticipating one. It was all, altogether, wonderfully exciting.

"Perhaps just a small sherry," Janice said.

Quite a while later, when Janice had not yet fallen but was quite determined that she would fall (they were sprawled across the mock Louis Seize sofa and she was speaking into more chest hair than she would have believed possible), she said:

"I have a confession to make."

"Don't bother. This isn't the first time that's been done to me, don't you worry. However you fixed it, it was Lady Luck pulled the strings. You are but *exactly* my type. The fair hair, the snub nose—just what I always go for."

"I did *not* fix it! That's a disgraceful suggestion!" Janice was as indignant about the crummy "Lady Luck" line as about the suggestion. "If you thought that surprise as I came in was acting, then you must be beyond recognizing genuine emotions. I *did* say to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reception that I was Mrs. Jeremy Fortescue—I find it gets me better service—but it *is* my real name."

"It's not mine."

"But of course it is. That's why I—"

"Do you know how I got it?"

He had pulled himself almost upright, and he sat over her, looking straight at her and still speaking with that nervous intensity which she found so exciting and disturbing. It's that nervousness that gives him his appeal, his irresistibility, she said to herself. It's almost as if he had never—

"I was sixteen," he said, in dark, reminiscent mood. "Sixteen, going on seventeen. I'd just been expelled from my third school. Portlington. You had to be really appalling to be expelled from Portlington. I was the first since the First World War. Those were the days when girls still had unwanted pregnancies. Now it would have been easily arranged. Anyway, I was desperate to go on the stage or into films or, failing that, join the Army or the Foreign Legion or whatever. And my father took me to this provincial dump, not far from here, actually. What was the name? Bridgehead, that's it. He took me to Bridgehead, and he dragged me along to this school—the Drake School, Bridgehead, and a scummy little dump it was. How they had the cheek to charge fees I don't know.

"Anyway, we were shown around and given prospectuses and a copy of the school magazine, and when we got back to the hotel my father said this was my last chance, but I was damned well going to work my guts out to make a go of it or he'd want to know the reason why. He had the idea I ought to go to university. He was a very dim man, my father. Anyway, after dinner my father went down to the bar for a drink and I was leafing through this damned school magazine and I saw 'Jeremy Fortescue—junior essay prize and under-15s hurdling cup'—"

Jeremy! Poor Jeremy! thought Janice, remembering the gold-stamped copy of *Hereward the Wake* and the tiny silver-plated cup that was already showing the copper underneath the plate.

"—and I thought, that's a hell of a good name for an actor. It had an upper-class ring about it, but it left open the possibility of devilment. And I packed my things, hitchhiked as far from Bridgehead as I could get, and eventually got taken on as ASM at a tiny rep theatre in Rotherham, run by a formidable lady who took a fancy to me. That was the beginning of it all."

"Fascinating," said Janice, as she felt his hand return to her shoul-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

der. The hand, she noticed, was not quite still, but yet it showed a practiced confidence. Soon she was far beyond noticing whether it was still or not.

Some hours later, when the hotel was quiet, in the middle of a very dark night, Janice giggled and said:

"Do you know what my mother calls you?"

"I can imagine."

"A fornicator, a child-molester, and a drunkard."

"She was fourteen, but she looked twenty-one," said Jeremy Fortescue. "Anyway, she did when I'd finished with her."

"I notice you don't deny the rest."

"How could I?" he asked, his breath now strong with whisky, and very close.

In the morning he insisted they have breakfast in his suite. When the waiter brought it in, Janice was in the bathroom showering, but Jeremy shouted:

"Breakfast up, darling. But don't hurry."

And Janice replied: "Won't be a minute."

They ate companionably, Jeremy seeming not to have eaten for hours. When they left, Jeremy brought the car round, and paid his bill with a credit card. He fetched Janice, and they sailed together through the foyer—how lucky she had had with her that enormous hat! she could not have looked anyone in the face—and then out into the car. He dropped her at the station, and behind the car's smoked windscreen they kissed goodbye. Jeremy got out of the car as Janice disappeared through the arch into the darkness of the station and waved and called goodbye. On the station forecourt he created a small sensation and signed a few autographs.

Once inside the station, Janice telephoned to the chairman of the meeting ("I've suddenly got this *appalling* headache") and then took the next train home. Jeremy tore himself away from the little knot of fans and drove straight to Markham Studios, where he was due to begin work on an American adaptation of *The Last Days of Pompeii*. He looked marvelous in a toga, and he struck up an immediate rapport with the actress playing Nydia. From the first day they were inseparable and the rest of the unit commented on it.

"Jeremy usually plays it so casual," said those of them who'd worked with him before. "Like he was one of nature's loners. Not this time." One or two who were really friends of his added: "Perhaps this is the one who'll finally get him away from that bitch." The remark got around the studio and was taken up even by those who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

did not know Jeremy Fortescue's wife. They were saying it when her body was found, six days later.

When the policeman came to the Prince Frederick, the clerk at Reception had been expecting him for some time and was quite twittery with excitement. He had read of the death of Mrs. Jeremy Fortescue in the papers, naturally, and had begun to think of himself as one of the last to see the dead woman alive. He even had a bookmark in the register, to show the Inspector where Jeremy Fortescue had signed in.

"But it's Mrs. Fortescue we're interested in," said the Inspector. "You're quite sure she was with him?"

"Not with him. She came later. But I saw her—I was on the desk here when she arrived."

"She didn't sign the register?"

"Of course not. Her husband had already signed."

"You've seen pictures of Mrs. Fortescue?"

"Oh, yes. In the newspapers. They weren't *good*, but I recognized her: the hair, that nose. Of course, I saw her only briefly, and one of the things that is impressed on us here is that we mustn't stare at the clientele: now and again someone may be with someone who—how shall I put it?—he isn't legally married to. But that was Mrs. Fortescue all right." He permitted himself the vulgarity of leaning over the desk and asking breathlessly: *"Why?"*

The Inspector was forthcoming. The newspapers that morning had mostly got the story right anyway, so there could be no harm in confirming them.

"Well, as you know—as everybody knows—she was murdered. Very possibly by a sex-maniac—we don't rule that out. Perhaps by some casual pickup. Perhaps by one or another of her regular boy friends. She was by all accounts a very fascinating woman."

A faint shadow of doubt wafted through the clerk's mind: the lady had not struck *him* as a very fascinating woman. But the doubt never got to his face, and the Inspector went on:

"That's why we have to eliminate the husband. There are some things about the death that make it look like a sudden fit of passion—in other words, a quite unpremeditated murder. Fortescue and his wife had led a cat-and-dog existence for some time. The marriage was on, it was off—you know the kind of thing. People in the acting world seem to have different standards of morality in most respects. She'd certainly had plenty of affairs—"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Not to mention him—"

"Precisely. But she kept, apparently, drawing him back. Or so his friends say. Expressing indifference about his affairs, but tormenting him about her own. Now, as you know, I imagine, the body was found buried in a coppice on Bromlet Heath, but it had been taken there, so we think. We can't be exact about the time of death, but the pathologist is pretty definite that he wouldn't expect it to be more than six days dead when it was found. And he'd say it in court. That puts her death, at the earliest, sometime on Wednesday of last week. The lady, by the way, was renting a cottage twenty miles from here—rather remote, and nobody saw any comings or goings, and she had no contact to speak of with the neighbors."

"A loner, too?"

"Well, no. But not neighborly. That explains how she could have disappeared for several days without anybody noticing. Jeremy Fortescue says he wasn't expected at the cottage and he didn't go there, and we have no evidence to contradict him. Says he isn't the cottage type, but a hotel type. His life style would seem to bear that out. Now, the problem is that Wednesday, which is a sort of outer limit, according to the pathologist. She couldn't have been killed earlier than that. But if you say she spent Wednesday night here—"

"Oh, she did. Spent the night. Breakfast in their rooms. Went through this foyer. There's people in town—I've heard them talking in the bar—saw him seeing her off at the station."

"Exactly. That's what we heard. And what he told us. Said he'd no idea where his wife was going. Said she was 'her own woman.' Well, that would be Thursday morning. And since then Jeremy Fortescue has been absolutely tied up. Filming twelve or fifteen hours a day and, well, let's call it vouched for at night. Markham Studios are a good thirty miles from Bromlet Heath, so to murder her, take her body there, and bury it, he'd need a good deal of time unvouched for, and he just hasn't got it. When they're working intensively on a film, they're hardly alone for a minute, and so he's been working—or whatever—practically non-stop."

"I see."

"For him to have done it, it would have to have been on the Wednesday."

"Then really, it doesn't look as if it could be him, does it, Inspector? And I must say while he was here, he behaved like a *perfect* gentleman."

"Yes, clearly we're going to have to look elsewhere," said the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Inspector, with a shade of regret in his voice, for a domestic murder was always straightforward, whereas sex maniacs were the very devil to bring down.

Over the years, Janice Fortescue put the other Jeremy out of her mind, though it was difficult. Very difficult at first. All the time she was expecting something to blow her world apart. It quite put her off her tennis. When the news broke of Veronica Fortescue's death, she was hour by hour expecting a visit from the police. Only when weeks went by and they hadn't come did she begin to gain a sense of renewed security. Only then could she bear to read the accounts of the case which she had stored up ("Your namesake, darling," she had explained to her Jeremy) and to order in her mind what must have happened.

The birth of her little boy was a great joy. He had a thick mop of black hair, even at birth, and as he grew up Jeremy, her Jeremy, used to say (how she wished he wouldn't): "I don't know where my lad got that thick black hair, because we're both so fair—and thin and sparse with it." Jeremy adored the determined little boy and often said: *"He's* not going to spend his life in boring old insurance. You can see he hasn't the temperament for it."

The name of the other Jeremy Fortescue often came up. He married again, he was nominated for an Oscar, he was arrested for brawling and breaking up a bar in Scotland somewhere. He seemed, still, to carry danger around with him. And of course in the Fortescue home that name was something of a joke, as it always had been. It came up when Janice's mother came to dinner with them on their tenth wedding anniversary. She was a decidedly elderly lady now, and reminiscent, and after they had toasted the marriage and were waiting for the lady help (hired specially) to announce dinner, she said:

"What a happy and successful marriage it has been! And to think I was so shocked when Janice told me about the engagement. What was it I called that other wretched Jeremy Fortescue? A fornicator, a child-molester, and a drunkard?"

And a murderer, added Janice silently, hugging to herself her strong-willed, hairy child.

"Q"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* short story by

ROBERT TWOHY

As Langstrom worked his raunchy red '66 Pontiac out of its space, she pulled from the floppy handbag a carving knife with eight inches of mean blade, flipped it a few times, and murmured, "Ever hear the phrase, 'The medium is the message?' "

"Can't say I have—what's it mean?"

"It means I wouldn't enjoy being found in a gully somewhere, all cold and yucky."

"That's the message, huh? And the knife's the medium?"

We are receiving more and more letters of praise for Robert Twohy's stories in EQMM, for which we thank the readers who wrote us and Mr. Twohy . . .

NARC IN LOVE

by ROBERT TWOHY

A beer-&-wine joint on Grand Avenue, Scotty's, supposed to have Friday night action, was padlocked. Langstrom walked north a few doors to Club Tropics for a beer and to find out why the padlock.

The bartender didn't know but said if true, good—"Or maybe it's not," sizing up Langstrom's scroungy jacket, shaggy brown hair, and skinny little beard. He said no more, but Langstrom got his drift. If Scotty's was open Langstrom would be there not here, which the bartender would rather.

Club Tropics was workingclass, a mom-&-pop spa, half a block and twenty-five years from Scotty's. Drinkers glowered at him. They didn't like dopers.

A small girl in a plaid shirt with a rip at one shoulder and worn old jeans and sandals trotted in, toting a floppy black handbag held

© 1985 by Robert Twohy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

together here and there with black tape. The drinkers didn't like her, either.

She had chopped black hair, bright green eyes, a cute nose. Seventeen, Langstrom guessed. She hung near the end and when the bartender lumped her way she chirped, "Can you lend me two dollars for gas? I'll leave my name, pay you tomorrow."

"Out—you're underage."

"Were I older would I crave gas more?"

Langstrom got it that she was parodying a line from Shakespeare or someone. The bartender wasn't amused. "Out."

She shrugged, flipped him a no-hard-feelings grin, and trotted out. The drinkers muttered that Jerry had handled the little mooch right, she probly didn't even own a car—where was her can if she needed gas? Wanted money for dope probly. They drank and glowered at Langstrom.

He left. She was half a block north, maybe heading for the 7–11 for her next try. He stretched out and caught up. "You really need gas?"

"Uh huh."

"How'll you carry it?"

"They'll lend me a can at the station."

"I got one in my car—it's around the corner from Scotty's."

She smiled, like pleased but not surprised that things were working out. He turned and she trotted beside him back along Grand.

He asked, "Why's Scotty's closed?"

"I dunno, he's always open Friday. He must be sick."

Or off on a deal. Langstrom had been told that nearly every bar owner on his list was a dealer to some degree.

He was new on the scene, starting only last week, which was when the dope detail had finally got operational. Sergeant Weare had plucked deputies from here and there—Langstrom from the Half Moon Bay substation where he'd been the past two years. They'd been given some lectures and last week started in their assigned territories, Langstrom's being North Peninsula, where he had no friends or acquaintances, Daly City to Lindenvale. This was his first stop in Lindenvale—and Scotty's was closed.

But maybe he could get something going with this small lass.

He wasn't thinking amorously but informationally. He sensed that she wasn't a rookie like he was, and knew the scene. Of course, if something amorous got started—but that wouldn't happen, she was just a kid. Her bright eyes, crooked smile, and bouncy walk tickled

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him. But he was way too old for her. He was between loves and had been for some time, but information was his objective, not kissyface.

As they walked, he asked who she was.

"Bobbie."

He said he was Bart, had recently tripped down from Oregon (not true), and had a room in San Bruno (true since last week).

She asked how he had learned about Scotty's. He said that at Dick's Burgers in San Bruno a dude had told him it was a right place. She nodded, as one who knew all the doper stops. He asked if she lived in Lindenvale.

"No, in my van."

"Go where the spirit moves you, huh? Nice life."

"Yeah, 'cept when you're out of gas in a dumb neighborhood."

"Where you parked?"

"Couple blocks south, on Wooster."

He asked what she did to get by. She said she waitressed when she had to, otherwise tripped around in her van—how about him?

"Oh, I have some, uh, contacts." He let that hang, like better she knew no more.

She widened the bright eyes and said, "Oh," dragging it out, but a gleam of mischief showed that she was putting him on, and not really impressed. Okay by him—if she took him for the average jerk doper pretending he was big-time, no harm done.

As he worked his raunchy red '66 Pontiac out of its space, she pulled from the floppy handbag a carving knife with eight inches of mean blade, flipped it a few times, and murmured, "Ever hear the phrase, 'The medium is the message?' "

So he had run into an intellectual, which tied in with her line back at Club Tropics. A McLuhanite yet. "Can't say I have—what's it mean?" He was heading north on Grand toward the Avenue, to turn left up to El Camino where there'd be a station open.

"It means I wouldn't enjoy being found in a gully somewhere, all cold and yucky."

"That's the message, huh? And the knife's the medium?"

She nodded, laid it back in the bag, smiled a littlegirl smile.

"You always show it when a stranger gives you a ride?"

"Uh huh."

"What if he shows you a gun?"

"Hasn't happened yet. Do *you* have a gun?"

"No." Another lie. He had a snubnose .38 clipped to his belt under the scroungy jacket.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She looked at him sharp-eyed a few seconds, then shrugged and looked off.

He slid the Pontiac into the Exxon at the top of the Avenue and fetched his two-gallon can from the trunk. She stood by as he filled it. He paid at the booth, they got back in the car, and a few seconds later were tooling back down the Avenue.

For a few blocks she looked at him in a measuring way, then said calmly, "Bet you *do* have a gun. Bet you're a narc."

He crossed Grand and she motioned that next block he should turn right. Four more blocks and she said, "My van's across the street on the corner, but pull over here, okay?" To the right were spaces halfway along the seedy residential block. He nosed into one and cut the motor. On the far corner under a streetlight was a beat-up old green Dodge van that looked close to terminal.

She sat watching him, making no move to slide out. He cut the lights. "Why do you think that?"

"Don't think it, feel it. Though you don't have cop's eyes, not yet—you're probly new.—D'you like narc work?"

"D'you like being a silly schoolgirl?"

"Not any more—I dropped out six months ago."

"Why?"

She grinned. "You're changing the subject."

"You don't have a subject. I'm not a narc. Why'd you drop out of school? Couldn't hack it?"

She sighed. "Okay—we'll pretend you're not. No, I could hack it. I was taking credit courses for U.C., mostly A's, a few B's. My IQ's one forty-eight. I told my counselor I wanted to take some shop courses. He looked like I'd kicked him—why, why? I said it's a weir-dening world—"

"*Weirdening* world?"

"Uh huh. My own word, I made it up."

"I like it."

"Thanks. The counselor didn't. Said the correct word was *weird,* and spelled it for me. So I said okay, it's a weird world and young people should be ready to take care of themselves if everything goes blooey. He couldn't argue that, so let me sign up for auto repair, probly figuring I'd cave in in a hurry. All the guys said I did great. I got a D."

"What's great about that?"

"Nothing. But the shop teachers are the drones in the hive, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

academics call the shots. So he got orders to give me a D so I'd get back to credit courses. Instead, I dropped out."

"You showed 'em."

She giggled. "Don't you know sarcasm's the cheapest form of humor?"

"I didn't. But my IQ ran down at fifty."

She winced. "I deserved that. You're right, I was bragging. What's an IQ?—an indicator is all. Depends on what you do with it, right?"

"Don't ask me. Anyway, you dropped out."

"Yeah, I did. I told my parents I was going on my own, to find out things I couldn't in school—what life is like, what people are like, who I am. I said I loved them and it wasn't their fault, just something I had to do." She looked off. "They're good people. I see them every month or so. They don't bug me, accept that it's my life to live or throw away, if I want to. I'll go back one day, go on to U.C. Not yet, though. I have things to find out first."

She was quiet for a little. Then she murmured, "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"How am I looking at you?"

"I've got a guy in the van. Promised I'd drive him to Truckee. Tonight."

"Your lover?"

"No, just a poor sick little dude who's sort of on the run, desperate to get off the scene."

"What'd he do?"

"Nothing. I mean he says he saw something really heavy, and now some guys are after him. I talked to the guys and they said he's nuts—anything he thinks he saw he hallucinated, nobody's after him—but he won't believe it. Finally I told him okay, I'd get him to his uncle's in Truckee."

Langstrom chewed that over. She shook her head, mock-sad. "You blew it."

"Blew what?"

"I gave you two shots to ask, 'Where's Truckee?' You didn't. A guy fresh down from Oregon would have."

"Not if he didn't give a rat's foot." He added casually, "What'd the guy say he saw?"

"He didn't tell me, but it doesn't matter, it was just a dope dream."

"So why drive him to Truckee, wherever it is?"

"You know where." He did—other side of the Sierras, toward Tahoe, two hundred miles more or less. "Because he's broke, scared,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he has no friends—what am I going to do, tell him get lost? The best thing for everyone is get him off the scene. Maybe at his uncle's he can start getting his head right."

"You a social worker?"

She was quiet a few seconds. "Maybe underneath that's what I am, and will be. I told you all that so you wouldn't waste your time if you had any big thoughts for tonight."

Langstrom shrugged. "Do the guys he's scared of know he's in your van?"

"No, why should they? They're not interested."

"I take it Truckee's fairly far. How are you going to make it on two gallons?"

"I'll stop home, borrow from my parents."

"I have about twenty dollars."

"Thanks, but no." She cocked her head, gazed at him. "For a narc you're okay."

"Okay I may be, but I'm not a narc."

"Sure you are. What—local cops, state, sheriff's department?"

"New Zealand Constabulary, actually—special assignment."

She giggled, picked up his hand from the seat, squeezed it a second. They looked at each other. She muttered, "This is silly."

"Sure it is. It's always been. In ancient Greece it was silly, in the time of the pharaohs. It never changes. They'll never computerize it—at least I hope not."

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-two, but still young at heart."

"Another lie—you're at least twenty-five."

"Oregon's rough—can wear you out fast."

"Why not cut the baloney and just say you're a narc? I won't spread it."

"If I were, I'd say no, and as I'm not I say no."

For about thirty seconds, neither said anything. Then she jerked her eyes away. "Damn, stop doing that! I'm not going to fall in love with you, is that clear?"

"Not particularly. You're cute when you're flustered."

"I'm not flustered." She shot him a wry grin. "The hell I'm not." She sighed. "I got to go—he'll be climbing the walls."

"What's his name?"

"Doesn't matter."

"You say you're not in love with him—"

"God, no."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"So why mix up in his problem?"

"It's not a problem, nobody's after him, he's just freaked. —Wait here, okay?"

He watched her trot across the street and up the block with the gas can. She went around the van and he didn't see her for a while. He guessed she had tapped on the side door, told the guy everything was okay, not to worry, then gone around back and put in the gas.

Now she was coming back. She opened the door, set the can on the floor and slid in, and her eyes sent him a message she wanted an answer to. They worked it out together.

He pushed her away and growled, "Now you're going to say 'so long' and drive this punk to Truckee. I have a better idea. I'll give him busfare."

"No, I said I'd drive him, so I will. That's it."

"Stubborn, aren't you?"

"When I make a promise."

"Okay. How about making *me* a promise?"

"What?"

"When'll you be back?"

"By Sunday."

"Meet me Sunday."

"Where?"

"Dick's."

"What time?"

"Six."

"All right."

"Promise?"

She nodded. They decoded another message. He said, "You're a pain, you know it?" He told her where the pain was. A lie—it was inside him, chest and belly, half a good feeling and half rotten, because she was leaving and he didn't like it. Very much he didn't like it. More than reasonably almost, he didn't like it.

He pushed her away. "Why'd I ever run into you?"

"Fate, I guess."

"Yeah, fate. You owe me $2.20." He turned on the motor, the lights, and nodded over at the van. "Can that wreck make it up the Sierras?"

"You're not supposed to know where Truckee is, remember?"

"I don't, I'm guessing. Can it make it?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In a breeze. The motor's beautiful. I ought to know, I keep it up myself."

"Wonderful. A D student."

"Politics. Should have been a B."

"Good night, Bobbie. Drive with care."

"Good night, narc."

She closed the door and he backed for clearance. Sliding past her, he mouthed, "Sunday, six o'clock," and she nodded hard, grinning her grin. He drove to the corner and turned west toward El Camino.

He drove north a mile, then something she'd said came whooshing into his brain. He broke the law, swinging right from center lane and down Chapin, charged back to the Avenue, across Grand to Wooster, and four blocks south. The space across the street at the corner was open.

He hung there in neutral half a minute. She was going to stop at her parents'—where? He didn't know her last name, or even the town where they lived.

I wouldn't enjoy being found in a gully somewhere, all cold and yucky.

Which was complete foolishness, his not hers. Nothing was going to happen. She'd drive the punk to Truckee and nobody was after him, he was a doped-out paranoid.

Who said nobody was after him? The guys he said were after him said so. And Bobbie believed them. She was superbright, wise to the scene—and seventeen years old.

Langstrom got in gear and back to El Camino. He cruised north, eyeing cars front and behind. Wrong, she wouldn't take El Camino, she'd take Bayshore over Bay Bridge and hook onto the freeway to Sacramento—or if her parents lived south, she might take San Mateo Bridge over the bay. Whichever, she was on her way, no chance to catch her now. "You blew it," she had said. Which was what he had done.

He went on to San Bruno. It's okay, he told himself—and Sunday evening, 6:00 P.M., that ugly, beautiful old van will pull into Dick's Burgers and she'll hop out and come trotting, with those bright eyes and that smile.

He'd fix on that because it was what was going to happen. Nothing else was going to happen. Nothing bad was going to come down.

Sunday he was at Dick's, an outside table. 6:00 came and the van didn't. 6:30 came.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At 7:00 he knew that the punk hadn't hallucinated, he'd seen what he'd seen. The heavy dudes had known she had him in the van, had spotted it and were probly hanging near when Langstrom had driven her to it. They'd watched him drive away, then followed her first to her parents', then away. Maybe they had followed a long way on into the night. There were lots of places on the climb up the Sierras where no cars are in sight either way, where a van could be forced onto a side road and guys out to silence a potential witness could do it at leisure. And a pretty girl, too. Not liking it, but when things turn really hairy heavies do what they have to do.

Then they'd have driven to places steep and deep and very remote. There were lots of such places in the Sierras. Down, down, down would have gone the bodies—separately, no doubt—and, finally, down, down, down the old Dodge van.

That was the way it was. He knew it.

At 8:00 he drove north, and in twenty minutes was on Grand. Some bikes were in the rack at Scotty's and the door was partly open.

He turned down to Wooster with a sense of strangeness—did he expect the van would be parked on that corner where two nights ago it had run out of gas? No, he didn't expect it—just longed to see it there was all.

A Toyota with no meaning for him sat smugly in the space. He hated it, had an impulse to go over and start smashing the fenders and hood with his gunbutt—what right did it have to sit there in the old van's space?

—He realized he had cut the motor and had the door half open. He sighed, shook his head, got going back to El Camino, back to San Bruno.

He pulled into Dick's and sat there an hour or so, then went on to his rooming house and sat in the dark. After a while his brain got tired churning up sick and violent scenes and turned off. He came to in his chair with Monday coming bright in the window.

That day, then Tuesday and Wednesday, mostly he drove—south on El Camino to San Jose, browsing towns on the way, then over to coastside and browsing around in the hills. He knew she hadn't driven the van back from the Sierras, but still he kept looking. It made no sense, but he had stopped caring about making sense—what did sense have to do with longing for sight of a terminal-looking old Dodge van?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At Dick's, he talked to a guy, and at The Silver Cage, a doper joint in San Bruno where he had hung out some last week, he talked to a guy, both saying they'd seen a small black-haired girl in an old green van around the scene here and there, but didn't know her. Neither said they had seen the van recently, certainly not since last Friday.

He was sliding off track because he had known her less than an hour and had fallen in love, then had let her go off with a guy marked for death, meaning she would die, too, when the heavies caught up—had just let her go, had done nothing to stop her. She was seventeen and in danger which she was blind to, and had needed someone to point it out. He had joked, "Why did I run into you?" and she had joked back, "Fate, I guess." But it had been true—fate *had* sent him to her and had dropped him sharp clues that she was in danger, and that he should lead her from it or go with her toward it. And he hadn't. "Drive with care," he'd said sweetly, letting her drive away.

Late Thursday he called Sergeant Weare, who asked why he hadn't called sooner.

"I got mixed up in a double murder, a girl named Bobbie and a guy I don't know. Up in the Sierras, probably—some guys followed them from Lindenvale and killed them and got their bodies out of sight. The van, too."

"You sound—"

"I know, I hear myself." Voice quick and edgy, clackety-clack. "I said 'so long and drive with care,' so she went off and they caught up and killed her. The guy, too, whoever he was. Very bright and pretty girl. The guy needed a friend to see him through his last hours, so she appointed herself. I was supposed to stand by her and lead her from danger or through it, and I didn't. Too bad for us all."

"Where are you now?"

"In a phonebooth."

"Can you make it in? I mean I want you to come in."

"I have a stop to make first."

He drove to Lindenvale, first down to Wooster to look at the space on the corner. It was open. He slid the Pontiac into it and sat there. After a little, she was beside him. He laid his hand down for her to take it and squeeze it. Fantasy, he knew, but felt her hand's pressure and looked at her bright eyes and crooked smile. "Hi, Bobbie," he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

said, and heard softly, "Hi, narc." Then she was gone, but for the first time since Sunday he was smiling.

He drove back to Grand and parked across from Scotty's, walked past a couple of parked bikes and into the joint. A dozen guys and girls were at the bar and a guy and a girl were shooting pool. The jukebox was rocking softly.

The bartender was a tall, strong-looking dude, black denim jacket, flat eyes, sideburns, greying hair—about thirty-five. Langstrom said, "Scotty?" The guy nodded. The jukebox rocked softly.

Langstrom slid his eyes over the guys at the bar, and the girls, and the two at the pooltable. Various types. Some might be heavies, but he wouldn't know who. He knew that what he was going to say would be freaky because that's what he was right now, which was good—he could say and do anything and not have a thought for what might come down on him. He didn't really give a damn.

He said, "A girl named Bobbie and a guy are dead. Some people followed them to the Sierras last Friday night because the guy had seen something and they had to get rid of him and so she had to be killed, too. Who knows about it? Who knows what happened? Who knows the killers?" He had fixed on Scotty, whose eyes were wide and white. He jerked his gaze to the bar and a big dude was moving his way.

He pulled his .38 from his belt and slammed it on the bar. The dude stopped and there was kind of a groaning sigh as everyone looked at the .38. The soft beat went on.

"You were closed Friday." Langstrom had turned his gaze back on Scotty. "You and some guys had worked out what you were going to do. You knew she had the guy in her van. You hung around, keeping your eye on it, then followed it—the punk had to be killed. Why? What had he seen you do? Tell me." He pointed the gun at Scotty.

A girl, staring at Langstrom, screamed, "He's crazy!"

"Right. I've been getting there since Sunday and now I'm there. So tell me, Scotty, how it happened, what you did, who was with you—"

"I've got nothing to tell."

A guy said raspingly, "Tell him." Others nodded.

Scotty's mouth worked like it had to make different shapes to let the words out. "Yes. Yes, I'll tell you. The girl—Bobbie, was it? She and the guy, the one you said. We went up there into the Sierras, some of us did. You were along, Joe—tell him what happened."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The guy's eyes were fixed on Langstrom's. "Yes, we went up in the Sierras, that was what happened. There were four of us, five—it *was* five, wasn't it?" he asked the thin blonde girl beside him.

"Five, yes, five of us." She gazed steadily at Langstrom. "Or six. We went up there and—" That was all for him because the dude who had been coming up behind him smashed him across the ear. The .38 went off and there were shouts and screams, but he didn't hear—he had bounced off the bar and slid down and lay among the wine stains on the concrete floor.

He came out of a doze. Weare was in a chair by the bed, reading a paper. He set it on the floor.

Langstrom said, "Nurse said I was out six days."

"Doctor says you have a clean fracture that will knit by itself. Your right ear channel is going to have to be rerouted or something."

"I hear you, but it's tinny and like from a distance. Was anyone hurt in the bar?"

"Only you."

"Last I remember I had my gun on Scotty."

"Somebody clobbered you with a pipewrench. The gun went off but no one was hit."

Langstrom lay quiet. Weare went on, "They said you talked about a girl named Bobbie, said she and a guy had been killed."

"I met her that Friday. She was driving the guy to Truckee. Some people were after him because he'd seen something heavy—so they killed them both. Scotty was one of them. That's why he was closed that Friday."

"He says he was sick."

"No, he was following them. Some other guys were along, maybe some girls."

"You know that?"

"I saw it in his eyes."

"You weren't exactly yourself right then—"

"I was crazy. Crazy things are all around us that we don't focus on. But when *you're* crazy, you can focus so clear you wonder why other people can't."

Weare said after a little, "Some people in the bar know a Bobbie. Scotty says he knows her. Nobody knows her well, or her last name—she's just one of the kids on the fringe of the scene. Short black hair, drives an old Dodge van—"

"That's her!" He felt a rush of joy. "She's okay? She's turned up?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He'd been wrong—all the horrors had been fantasy, churned up out of guilt.

Weare said slowly, "We haven't got word on her yet. I mean, nobody's seen her around for a while."

"Since Friday, two weeks ago?"

"Well—no, I guess not."

Langstrom had strained up in bed. Now he lay back. The rush was gone, nothing but cold inside. Nothing had changed. "You won't get any word. She's dead."

"Why are you sure?"

"She promised she'd meet me that Sunday."

"She could have changed her mind, tripped off somewhere."

"No, she'd have met me."

"Maybe she had an accident."

"No, they killed her and put her and the guy where they won't be found. The van, too."

"You saw all that in Scotty's eyes?"

"I knew it long before I saw him. They're in the Sierras somewhere—she and the guy and the van."

Weare got up and moved to the door. Langstrom asked, "How long will I be here?"

"Not long probably. Try not to, well, think too much."

"About her, you mean? About how I could have stopped her from going and didn't? Or could have rode with her in the van and didn't? Or could have followed behind and didn't?"

Weare pressed his lips together, gazed at him, and said quietly, "Don't beat on yourself."

"Why not? I was supposed to take care of her—that was the whole idea I met her. She was in danger. She couldn't see it, being just a young girl, but I was supposed to see it, it was clear enough. Fate gives you a chance, and you miss it—so that ended our love story. We had a few jokes, a couple of kisses. Now she's dead in the Sierras and I'm here. Things are weird, Weare, and they're weirdening—"

He began to laugh, if that's what it was. Weare barked like a sergeant, commanded him to stop. Langstrom stared at him and the sound went on. Weare went down the corridor to get the nurse, but she had heard and was coming.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a *NEW* short story by

WILLIAM BANKIER

"Ambitious writers make me tired," scribbled Marshall Love. "Do your job or you'll get fired."

An unlikely but most likeable story from former Montreal adman William Bankier—with our compliments to American Greetings, Hallmark, Norcross, et al . . .

MURDER IN THE CARDS

by WILLIAM BANKIER

A new enough arrival from Baytown still to be enthusiastic about the very idea of working in Montreal, Basil Furness cranked paper into his typewriter while staring across the studio at Libby Betterman, whose golden head was nose-close to the illustration on her drawing board.

"I've got a good one," he said, beginning to type. "We can have some fun with this one."

"Go, man, go," Libby murmured, her mind miles away as she applied rosy flesh tones to a massive cupid supporting a Valentine heart on his shoulders as if he were Atlas and it the world. Her father would be coming in soon to see Marshall Love, and between her old man and the boss it was always touch-and-go.

Basil finished typing and brought the page to Libby's shoulder where she sat by the window. Outside, he could see the benches and cobbles and potted flowers of Jacques Cartier Square. Fantastic! Not only was he employed in Canada's most colorful city but his office was actually in Le Vieux Montréal. Tourists paid big money to come here and walk the streets—his friend Alexander Mendel brought them along in droves via his travel-agency offices around the East coast. And this was his turf!

© 1985 by William Bankier.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Read it," he said, and added: "Another fine production from Lib and Bas."

Libby Betterman read aloud:

"Happy birthday, wife and mother,
Love from one crock to another.
Life begins at forty-five,
So step around and look alive."

She looked up at her young colleague accusingly. "It's funny," she said.

"That's right. Love Productions has a line of comic greeting cards."

"But Mr. Love writes the funny ones. You were hired to produce sentiments."

"And composing sentimental greetings is making me semi-mental. I need a change."

"Marshall will never buy it."

Basil took his creation out of the studio and along a narrow corridor to a closed door with a brass wolf's-head knocker on it. He chucked the beast under the chin, producing a staccato tap. The boss's baritone thundered from within. "Come!"

Marshall Love was sitting in a plush-upholstered cinema seat bolted to the floor at one end of a longish room. Beside him on a table was a projector which used mirrors and a strong light to flash any kind of printed material onto a screen. Such a screen filled the wall at the other end of the office. As Basil came in, the boss switched off the projector and the image died.

"I know you're busy, Mr. Love, but I've just done something I think is good and I'd like your reaction."

A man in his early fifties, Marshall Love was short and heavy-set, with pale-blue eyes screwed into dark sockets on either side of a pugnacious nose. His crewcut brindle hair grew in all directions. He looked like a villain in a B-western and knew it.

"Let's see this product of your genius." While he read the verse, Love's lips moved as if he were ingesting his employee's words. At the end, he said, "This is not a sentimental greeting."

"I know. I thought it might be good for our comic line."

"Wrong. The Baron writes the jokes. You were hired to supply the romantic stuff."

"But if I get a good idea—"

"Don't argue with me, sonny-boy." Love scribbled a couple of lines on his pad, switched on his projector, and set the page on the tray.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The words appeared writ large on the bright screen. "Here's a sentiment for you."

"Ambitious writers make me tired,
Do your job or you'll get fired."

Billy Betterman showed up at half past eleven, carrying a brown envelope three feet square. He stood beside his daughter and watched her with apologetic devotion as she worked.

"How are you, Dad?" she said eventually.

"Fine, old girl. I like your hair that way."

"I just tied it back with an old scarf." But his approval made her face light up.

"You're looking well, sir," Basil said. It was not true—Betterman struggled with an alcohol problem which signaled its progress by making a beacon of his nose. His sheepish eyes were set in beds of phlegm. Once he had been a successful illustrator. Now, prematurely aged, he struggled to fulfil his duties as a salesman for Lesco Printing.

"Thank you, Basil." The undeserved compliment served its intended purpose by causing Betterman to straighten up and lift his chin. "Are you all right?"

"Frustrated by an unappreciative employer," Basil said.

"I know how you feel."

Libby glanced down the corridor. *"Parlez au diable,"* she said.

Marshall Love came into the studio with sleeves rolled up over robust arms. He looked around as if his job were to move furniture downstairs and into a van. "Sorry to break up this family get-together," he said. "I thought your appointment was with me."

"Just coming in, Mr. Love. Sorry I'm late."

"We're used to that with you, Billy. The wonder is that you show up at all. One of these days you won't."

The printer's rep absorbed the abuse with a grin, as if it were all banter between friends. Basil looked at Libby and glanced away. Her eyes were darting between her father and her boss as if she were making up her mind which of them would be first out of the window.

"Shall we go into your office, Mr. Love?" Betterman lifted the envelope.

"Show me here. Let everybody see what great work you've brought me."

The envelope contained first proofs of several cards that were in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

production. Love glanced at them, poking a finger here and there: "Look at that," he complained. "And that. The colors are out of register. And you call that a flesh tone?"

The rep was making notes. "We can fix that up, Mr. Love. No problem." These were first proofs, expected to contain errors needing correction. Only this client would make such an issue of it. But the old man said nothing except, "Anything else?"

"I can see typos in the copy without even looking." Love gathered up the proofs. "I'll go over them and mark the corrections. Come back at three." He bustled away into his dim corridor, the minotaur going back into the maze.

The studio was silent with embarrassment. At last Betterman said, "The customer is always right."

"If the UN were concerned with individual atrocities," Basil said, "we could convene the General Assembly on that one."

"Come to lunch, Dad," Libby said. "I can leave at twelve."

"I'll have to take a raincheck," her father said, brushing almost a kiss over the crown of her golden head. "I've got to see somebody else right now."

Everybody knew the taverns were open and that Billy Betterman's appointment was with a quart of cold ale. "You take care," Libby said.

When they were alone, Basil said, "Come to lunch with *me*, then."

"You know as well as I do he doesn't like us both to go out at the same time." It was a pointless rule, since there were no telephones to answer, no public to serve, but Love wanted somebody there at all times.

"Let's go anyway," Basil said. "I'm ready to bust something or somebody around here and I may as well start with one of his stupid rules."

"Why do we go on working for the man?" Basil asked. They were seated at a table on the pavement outside the Hotel de Gaspé in the shade of a Cinzano umbrella. The spinach pie had been superb and they were on their second carafe of California white. Jacques Cartier Square teemed with sun-dazed strollers and the ripe smell of the river seeped between warehouse walls.

"I can only give you my reasons," Libby said. "For one thing, studio jobs are not that easy to come by for somebody like me who never trained. I can't do all the mechanical pasteup work they expect

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you to do. And I'm no great illustrator. I can doodle the pictures that go in greeting cards." She drank some wine. "Besides, there's Dad."

"What about Dad?" Basil experienced a thrill at referring to Libby's father as his own.

"If I were to quit, I'm convinced Love would dump Billy Betterman, and if that happened Lesco Printing would fire him. They only keep him because he can service the Marshall Love account. And that only continues because of this three-way balance between him and me and Mr. Love."

"I'm partly like you," Basil said. "There are not that many ways a writer can make a living by writing. I'm new here, I don't know Montreal all that well. I don't have the experience to be a copywriter in an ad agency. Besides, I hear the pressure there is tough. So it's a case of opting for the devil I know." He topped up both glasses from the carafe. "But something is going to have to happen. Preferably to Mr. Love."

"How did you happen to come to Montreal from Baytown?"

"It's a success story. Local boy makes good. I was working at the local radio station, CBAY, writing commercials and continuity when I heard about the CBC series *Opportunity Calls*. I decided to have a go."

"Isn't that a musical show, like an amateur hour?"

"Yes. But they had a spot last year for aspiring writers. You wrote a one-minute commercial for anything you liked and came on and read it. Mine won the series."

"Fabulous. But how did that bring you to Montreal?"

"I met a guy named Ted Harper. He did the musical arrangements on the show and his quartet did the backing vocals. He also has a company that produces jingles for Montreal advertisers. He liked my flair and gave me a freelance job. When the client liked it, he suggested I was wasting myself in Baytown, I should move to Montreal. I did, on the strength of a few more bits of work from Harper. Once I was here, I heard about this job with Marshall Love, applied, and, sad to relate, got it."

"Your story is more interesting than mine." Libby seemed to be concentrating more on Basil now. After months of association in the studio, he was emerging as a dimensional character. "What was the freelance job that caused Harper to invite you here?" she asked.

"A client named the Alexander Mendel Travel Agency. They have offices all over, here and in the States. Harper was hired to do them a musical signature for all his broadcast advertising. I came up with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the idea. It's based on the old Les Brown song and we got a girl to sing it in a voice a lot like Doris Day's." Under the influence of the wine, Basil rendered his masterpiece: *"Gonna take a Sandy Mendel journey . . ."*

The boss was wound up, loaded, and aimed when Basil and Libby drifted into the studio at ten after three. "Are the two of you tired of working here?" he demanded. "Are you tired of living? I don't pay you to drink on company time."

Exceeding wine had made Basil Furness bold. "We don't turn out shoes on a machine, Mr. Love," he said. "My brain is active all the time. I think copy even when I'm home at night. My conscience is clear. You are getting full value from me as a creator of sentimental verse."

"Make sure your desk is clear for the man who replaces you. I'd have more to say, only my wife is coming in to try and sell me something." They could hear her step on the stairs. "But I'll have more to say about this tomorrow. Now get to work."

Mildred Love came into the studio, puffing from the climb, smiling benignly like the child she was. Ten years younger than her husband, she had been wooed and won by Marshall Love not long after her father died, leaving her as his legacy the townhouse from which the greeting-cards producer ran his business. By marrying his landlady, Love put the firm on a sounder financial footing. He also acquired another passive human being to kick around.

"Hello, everybody," Mildred said. She had the face of a movie starlet, containing eyes that watched her husband with the attentiveness of a trained dog. "I'm so glad you're here, Marshall. I went ahead and got those holiday brochures we were talking about. We can take the train across Canada to Alberta, our own compartment, great meals in the dining car. Stay at a hotel on Lake Louise, then on to the coast."

"What year?" Love asked.

"Pardon me?"

"There is no way I can get out of the office this summer. Vacations are for people with nothing to do."

"But we talked about it, darling."

"*You* talked about it. Now I'm talking. And telling you to forget it. I hope you haven't paid for any advance bookings."

"I was going to do that next."

"Next, you can walk on down the stairs. There's a trash basket

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fastened to the lamppost out there that would make a dandy place for you to put those brochures."

When Mildred Love had left the studio, crushed, and the boss had gone back into his office, Libby said, "That is the limit. If I have to watch him torture that poor dumb animal one more time—"

Basil had a gleam in his eye. "I have it. Will you go along with me, Libby?"

"Depends what you have. And whether it's contagious."

"The idea. It means getting rid of Marshall Love. Call it murder or call it urban renewal. Are you with me?"

Libby thought about killing Marshall Love. "My conscience would be clear," she said. "There was no need for the prosecution to feel guilty after the war trials. I just don't want to get caught."

"If we're clever enough and careful enough, we'll get away with it." He picked up the telephone. "I'll get in touch with Ted Harper. Alexander Mendel owes me a favor and now is the time to collect."

"What can I do for you?" Ted Harper said across a table full of cold beer in the Rymark Tavern. Harper was a neat little man in a blue suit with striped shirt and tie. He wore rimless glasses on a face so thin his skull might have been arrested for indecent exposure. "I know we're not here for the beer."

"Remember how Mendel was so hard up for a theme and you gave me the assignment and I came up with the Sandy Mendel journey idea?"

"So I owe you. So?"

"How much leverage do you have with Mendel? Can you persuade him to do something he shouldn't do?"

"Sandy owes me a couple, too. I could get him to do almost anything. Provided he doesn't have to get rid of the body."

Basil blushed. "That'll be taken care of," he said. "It's this contest he has going currently. The one where first prize is a trip to Europe for two aboard the *S.S. Belladonna.*"

"They're about to announce the winner."

"And I want to rig it. I want my man to win. Can do?"

"Is he entered?" Harper had been born in Calgary, and as a child had traveled with the family music show in an old station wagon, barnstorming towns in Western Canada and the U.S.A. through the lean years of the late Thirties. After such an upbringing, no request came to him as a surprise.

"I can do an entry for him if it's necessary."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Should be no big deal. Somebody has to win. What about all the other prizes?"

"They can come straight out of the drum."

"Who is the lucky person?" Harper asked.

"Marshall Love and wife Mildred. And once you've set it," Basil said, "forget it."

Love came out of his office with a letter in his hand and a puzzled expression on his face. "What I don't understand," he said, "is how I got in the contest. I've just won a sea voyage for two to Europe. But I don't remember entering."

"Guilty, with explanation," Basil said.

"You entered me?"

"I never thought the entry would win or I'd have put my own name on it."

"Must be worth a fair amount of money," Love said. He cogitated. "Still, away from the office for almost a month. All the dough it'll cost while we're there. Clothes for Mildred . . ." He showed the letter the face of a man who has swallowed mustard and water.

"By rights the prize belongs to Basil," Libby said. "If you're going to be fair, you should give the prize to him."

"What fair?" the boss said. "He entered my name—nobody forced him. The prize is mine." He stumped back into his office and they heard him dialing the telephone. "Mildred?" he shouted almost immediately, "what took you so long? You know that vacation you're always moaning about—"

Basil made so bold as to approach his colleague, to lift her up from her chair, and to embrace her. "He's taken the bait!"

"When do we buy our tickets?"

"When we're sure he's definitely going."

"Can I believe it?" Libby asked. "Are we going to lose that sadistic boor?"

"We really are."

"What happens afterward? Will we still have a job to come to?"

"Why not? Mildred will adjust to being a widow, I expect. We'll take her to dinner and suggest the business continue with us in charge. Then it will be Lib and Bas Productions, forever."

In the scrimmage of the boarding hall at the Montreal waterfront terminus, Pier 9, Basil and Libby made their way to the Tourist Class gangway and lined up to have their passports and tickets

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

checked. "What if he rings the office and nobody's there?" Libby said.

"He won't. I told him we wanted to come down and see the ship sail. He said all right, as long as we work tonight."

Billy Betterman appeared with a bottle of champagne and a bottle of red wine. The latter was uncapped and still wrapped in its brown paper bag. He handed the champagne to his daughter. "Pop this on your first night at sea," he said. His eyes filled up and he braced himself with a pull from the other bottle.

"Sweet idea, Daddy." She kissed him.

"I've never kidded you, Lib," he said. "I depend on you. With you gone, I feel I'm not going to come through."

"Marshall is sailing, too. He's the enemy."

"I know. But I'm not much good at being alone in the world."

"You won't be," Basil said. "We'll be back before you know it. And I can practically guarantee that things will be better."

"Nice of you to say so," the old man said. "But that has never been my experience."

Libby was unpacking things in their cabin. "You realize he'll fire us on the spot when he discovers we're sailing, too."

"What if he does? He isn't coming back. He isn't even going to make it to Southampton."

"I was so embarrassed buying this thing in the sex shop." Libby tucked a package into a drawer. "Can this possibly work?"

"It's too complicated not to work. Besides, I know Marshall Love."

"What makes you think he'll jump overboard to save Mildred?"

"His ego. Remember that story he told us when he broke down and supplied an office bottle last Christmas? The hiking trip and Mildred breaking her ankle eleven miles from civilization? He carried her all the way back."

"An unlikely hero."

"Heroism had nothing to do with it. He said so himself. He told Mildred that if anything disastrous was going to happen to her it was because Marshall Love said so, not because fate or destiny so decreed. He controls their lives and always will."

As they left the cabin and headed up the stairs to the nearest deck, Libby asked, "When do we break the ice?"

"Let's give it a day or so," Basil said, "till we get out of the Saint Lawrence and into the Atlantic. We can't make our move till then, anyway . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They sailed past Quebec City, the stone ramparts of the historic fortress frowning down over the river. On the *Belladonna* they traveled through the glacial shield of the Gaspé district, the St. Lawrence widening as they approached the Gulf, the left bank veering away to Labrador, the muskeg, eventually to the Arctic, while on their right the land rolled south to the Maritimes and New England. Then they were out of sight of land, steaming into the immeasurable reaches of the North Atlantic.

Basil and Libby stood at the rail and marveled, because it was summer, at the sight of an iceberg on the horizon, rising from the water like a sharp grey tooth. Sharing a cabin had brought them closer together, though they had yet to share one of the twin beds. "Can we set him up now?" Libby asked.

"Tonight," Basil confirmed. "In the ballroom after dinner."

The *Belladonna*'s dance band, known as The Deadly Nightshades, was playing a geometrical cha-cha-cha when the young conspirators entered the spectacular room with its broad, winding staircase leading to a polished floor, mezzanine tables ranged behind upholstered railings, and everywhere carpets, mirrors, concealed lighting. They found Marshall and Mildred Love seated alone at a small table over tall drinks, and Basil spoke as they approached.

"Surprise, surprise."

"How did *you* get here?"

"We bought tickets," Libby said.

"Who's watching the office?"

"Nobody. We're just taking our vacations at the same time." Basil drew back a chair for Libby, then sat beside her. "Lots of companies do that instead of limping along on half staff."

"Anyway," Libby said, "you know nothing gets done unless you're there to approve it, so what's the difference?"

"You should have asked me!"

"So we could have the argument there instead of here?" Basil caught the eye of a waiter and ordered drinks. "And how are you, Mrs. Love?"

"It's so nice to run into familiar faces." Mildred bestowed upon them her sweet, long-suffering smile.

The cabaret began and they watched a comedian who was a copy of Henny Youngman, a magician who was a copy of Paul Daniels, a dance team who were copies of Bracia and Tybee, and the star act, a singer who had borrowed the arrangements and mannerisms of Glen Campbell. In this floating world, where the absence of excise

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tax let drinks cost what they were worth, established entertainment figures did not exist. Anybody could be anybody.

They went on to the casino. A girl with cornsilk hair and a brooding mouth dealt 21 with the speed of a racing windshield wiper. Marshall and his wife mounted stools at her table, Bas and Lib standing behind them. Mildred struck up a rapport with the girl, said "please" when she asked for a card, and covered her mouth apologetically when she won.

Her husband treated the pretty dealer like a thug he had encountered in an alley. "She's cold!" he cried. "Hit her, hit her now!" After ten minutes of this aggression, the young couple took their leave.

"I feel as if I need to have my dress cleaned," Libby said as they made their way down flights of carpeted stairs to D deck.

"We should offer a prayer of thanks," Basil said, "that so few people are like Marshall Love. When survival depended on how tough you were, kill or be killed, fight for your share, then there may have been justification for it. But today anybody can see there's enough for everybody, and if you want more you can get it by persuasion." He unlocked the cabin door. "No, I'm afraid our boss acts like a brute because it satisfies him. He's evil—it's that simple."

As she brushed her teeth, Libby said, "When do we do him?"

"Tomorrow night. We can reconnoiter the ship during the day and find the right spot on the boat deck—someplace aft." Basil was hovering. "You're using a different toothpaste. May I taste?"

She extended the tube. "Be my guest."

"No need to waste it," he said, putting his arms around her. "What you've already used will give me the idea."

In the morning, after breakfast at their window table and before broth in their deckchairs, the young card-creators climbed to the boat deck and found a secluded area near the stern of the ship where, across a railing, they could see the broad green-and-white wake stretching like a highway to the horizon. "This is the place," Basil said. "You can stash the inflatable woman under the lifeboat."

"I'll need one of Mildred's costumes."

"I'm sure you can work that once you get her off by herself this afternoon. That's when I'll set up Marshall so the note from Mildred will seem appropriate."

"You were going to give me copy," Libby reminded him, "so I can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do the note in her handwriting. I have the sample—that letter she sent to the office when she was away visiting her mother."

"I'll compose it now," Basil said. "Then I'll go and find the boss."

At three o'clock Basil fell into step beside Marshall Love as the older man was leaving the lecture hall following a talk on the Romans in Britain. "Did it cover the campaigns of Dubious Caesar?" Basil chuckled to underline his little joke, but Love's face was grim. He was not enjoying himself. He needed the office situation where he was in power. He missed having Billy Betterman to kick around and his two young creative people to bring him ideas, four out of five of which he could reject. He was a fish out of water on this pleasure cruise.

"Where's Mrs. Love?" Basil asked, as if he didn't know.

"Gone off for a woman-to-woman chat with your traveling companion." The boss displayed in those cavernous eyes a hunger that would never be satisfied. "How do you two get to stay in the same cabin? You aren't married, you're not even engaged. In my day we could never get away with that."

"These are the nineteen-eighties," Basil said. "We're getting away from the old beliefs. Such as every twenty years half the younger generation must be sent to the slaughter. And if you kiss a girl your lips will grow moldy."

"I need a drink."

Basil followed Love into the bar where they ordered large whiskies. Staring through the window at a world full of ocean, he said, "I'm worried about your wife, Mr. Love. I hope you don't mind my saying that."

"I mind all to hell. What business is my wife of yours?"

"I couldn't help noticing. She seems blue. Libby caught it before I did. That's why she's having a heart-to-heart with her right now."

"I can't believe it! You people work for me! I pay you for work you're hardly able to produce! And here you are advising me on my wife's state of mind!"

"Sometimes an outsider notices things the husband is unaware of."

"Have you noticed how I'm considering running my business without you on staff?" Love said. But he finished his drink with a thoughtful look in his eye.

Basil went back to the cabin and found Libby finishing the note.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It worked fine," she said as, tongue between teeth, she bent to her forging, the Mildred original taped to the mirror in front of her. "As we were strolling, I faked a dizzy spell in the neighborhood of their stateroom. Mildred invited me to come in and have a lie-down. I went with her, then I said I needed my special pills from our cabin. I gave her the key and she came down here to get them. That gave me time to steal a dress of hers and hide it in my totebag."

"You did well." Basil found the inflatable female in its package at the bottom of a drawer. "Do you think you can lure her away again this evening?"

"Leave it to me. I'll say I want to talk about you. We'll go to her stateroom again. Then I'll say there's a love-poem of yours I'd like her to see and I'll come here to get it. Or so she'll believe. No problem."

"The dummy had better be inflated and dressed now." Basil huffed and puffed and gradually the plastic figure achieved vaguely human proportions. When it was full size, Libby stared at it skeptically.

"Could you love a thing like that?" she asked.

"Only on a very long and lonely voyage."

With pins and clips, Mildred Love's dress was made a reasonable fit. "The head looks wrong," Libby said. She tied a scarf under the chin and shook her head. "Doesn't look much like a real person."

"It'll be dark on the boat deck. And Marshall will be expecting to see his wife. He'll only have her in sight for a couple of seconds."

"When do I stash it under the boat?"

"After dark. When people are in the dining room."

Libby was hefting the doll. "This thing weighs nothing. When Mrs. Love commits suicide, she's going to go floating off into the sky like Mary Poppins."

"Clever girl." Basil went back to the drawer and brought out a pair of ankle weights. "These should take her straight down."

After the evening meal, Basil played the slot machines in the casino for a while, then sought out Marshall Love, discovering him at the same table in the bar. He collected a drink for himself and a double for the boss and brought them to the table.

"This is getting to be a habit," Love said.

"I can sit elsewhere if you like," Basil said, lowering himself into the chair facing the older man.

"I mean Mildred off somewhere with young Betterman. I don't think that girl is a good influence on her."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"From what I gather, Libby is doing the listening. Your wife is sorely in need of someone upon whom she can unburden herself."

"Mildred is the same as she always was."

"I only hope you're right."

Basil was about to go for more drinks when the waiter brought the note twenty minutes later. This was when his heart began to pound—the machinery was turning, there was no going back. He stared at the sheet of notepaper while his boss read the message written in what purported to be his wife's hand.

Love's eyes widened. "Listen to this," he said and read the note aloud: "Dear Marshall, I have to tell you there must be another way. You have never been an easy man to talk to, but I am near the end of my tether. Somehow, by hook or by crook, I must get out of this trap. I am terribly afraid that unless we can come to an understanding, I will be forced to try something desperate. Sorry to spoil our holiday. All my love, Mildred."

"I don't like the sound of that," Basil said.

"Mildred never complains like that."

"She's trying to tell you something. You'd better listen."

"Trap? What trap? We live in one of the better houses in Montreal."

"She's talking on another level, sir. Perhaps you should—"

"The only understanding she needs to come to is how lucky she is." Love crammed the note into a pocket. "Let's have another drink. Waiter!"

Libby approached the table half an hour later. Her face was pale, her eyes wide. She even frightened Basil. "Come quickly, both of you," she said, "Mildred broke away from me a minute ago! She was talking about ending it all! She's gone up to the boat deck!" She hurried back out of the bar the way she came.

"Do you believe this?" Love asked.

Basil paused long enough to give Libby the head start she needed. He quickly finished his drink. "I think we'd better believe it. Let's go."

They emerged onto the boat deck, where a chilly night breeze was keeping the area clear of passengers. Basil led the way aft. He slowed down as they approached the area where Libby had hidden the inflatable woman. "I see something," Love said.

Basil saw it, too. "Where?"

"By that last boat."

Dimly visible against the skyline, Libby seemed to be struggling

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with a woman who was trying to climb over the railing. "Millie, don't!" she yelled.

"Hold on!" Love shouted as he ran forward. But his wife's dress flashed and was gone as it went over the side.

"I couldn't stop her!" Libby bawled at him through her tears.

Marshall Love stripped off his jacket. "The sea is calm," he said. "I'm a strong swimmer." He climbed onto the railing and balanced himself for a dive. "Stop the ship and have them come back for me." He was gone in a straight leap into the water. They saw him surface and begin a powerful stroke as the *S.S. Belladonna* steamed on.

"What was that he said?" Libby asked.

"I'm not sure," Basil said as he threw Love's jacket over the side. "I think he said, Enjoy your trip and have a drink on me."

Libby went back to Mildred in her stateroom, showed her the love poem from Basil she had gone to collect, then suggested they go to the disco to watch the young people dancing. This left the stateroom free for Basil to come by, using the spare key Mildred had given to Libby so she could come and go. He left the suicide note forged by Libby in a facsimile of Love's fierce handwriting, then wandered through the disco until he ran into the two ladies.

"Where do they get the energy?" he asked.

"Were you with Marshall?" Mildred asked.

"For a while. He was even worse company than usual. He said he was going out on deck and I, for one, was glad to be rid of him."

Mildred sighed. "I know what you mean," she said.

A rhyming suicide note was unusual but not totally unexpected coming from a man whose business was producing greeting cards. It said:

"This life is full of stupid people,
Boring jobs and lousy pay.
Lots of luck to those who like it—
I can't hack it one more day."

The captain of the ship conducted an inquiry. Basil testified that Love had been in a black mood that night. A surprise endorsement to their plot came from the widow, who said that her husband had been threatening suicide over the past year. She had put it down to a desire on his part to frighten her, but apparently the smoke had been evidence of fire.

Police and journalists made much of the story in Southampton.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But within a few days Basil and Libby were able to put the accident behind them and book a flight home via Air Canada. The widow Love, surprisingly, decided to go to Paris on her own for one of those vacations she had planned in the past only to have Marshall cancel at the last minute.

"May we take over then and run the business?" Basil concluded their farewell conversation. "We know how everything works, we're familiar with the routine."

"Yes, by all means, you two young people run Love Greeting Cards as partners," a more youthful Mildred said. "And since increased responsibilities merit greater reimbursement, please add fifty percent to your salaries."

As they left for the airport, Basil said to Libby, "What's that old adage about the wages of sin?"

The card came in the mail delivery three weeks after they were back at work in the studio above Jacques Cartier Square. Basil opened it and read it. "I don't believe it," he murmured. "Come and see this, Lib."

"What is it?"

"Self-explanatory."

She stood at his shoulder and read from the card scrawled in the familiar aggressive lettering:

There I was in mid-Atlantic,
Swimming with no wife in sight,
While the lights of *Belladonna*
Vanished in the summer night,
When an ancient Taiwan freighter
Happened to come chugging by,
Lifted me from out the water,
Fed me, made me warm and dry.
Weeks went by as slow boat bore me
To a port in old Brazil.
Here I wait, but not forever—
I'll return, I will, I will!
Local papers told the story
How I took my life at sea.
Widow said she saw it coming.
Well, I guess it's up to me.
Have no fear, 'twill be our secret,
No police will be involved—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marshall's dive, today a mystery,
Evermore remains unsolved.
As for you, just wait and worry.
I'll return and take control—
You will pay and pay forever
As I subjugate your soul."

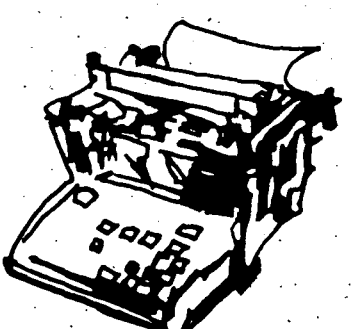
Libby finished reading, wandered back to her drawing board, and sat down. "Can he do that?" she asked in a faint voice.

"Do what?"

"Subjugate my soul."

"Only if we let him." Basil put pencil to paper and began composing a reply. When it was finished, he showed it to Libby. "We'll send this by return mail to Brazil. Let the boss know where we all stand."

"Welcome back, oh peerless leader,
Sorely, sorely you've been missed.
When you think of those who hate you,
Place our names atop the list.
Or—if you're for starting over—
This is where vendetta ends.
Be a mensch, forego aggression,
Hurry home and greet your friends."



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ORDER FORM

Send to ELLERY QUEEN MAGAZINE
Classified Advertising Department/Suite 1401
380 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

Only $59.00 for 20 Words or Less
$2.95 each additional word
Capitalized words add—40¢ per word
SAVE 15% WITH 3 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS SAME COPY ORDER

DEADLINE: Copy and payment must be in by the 5th day of the third preceding month for issue in which ad is to appear.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

YOUR NAME_____

FIRM (NAME IN AD)_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE:_____ DATE:_____

YOUR SIGNATURE_____

_____ Words at $2.95 each $ .....

_____ Capitalized word at .40¢ each
Total amount for 1 ad $ _____

15% Savings with 3 Consecutive Months Discount

(a) Multiply one ad total $_____ x 3 = $ .....
(b) Multiply total amount on above line by _____ x .85

(c) Total amount for 3 ads $

(Example. One 20 word ad $59.00 x 3 months = $177.00 x .85 = $150.45)

$_____ is enclosed for _____ insertion(s) in the _____ issue(s) _____ Heading

(FOR ADDITIONAL WORDS ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET)

(1) **$59.00**	(2) **$59.00**	(3) **$59.00**	(4) **$59.00**	(5) **$59.00**
(6) **$59.00**	(7) **$59.00**	(8) **$59.00**	(9) **$59.00**	(10) **$59.00**
(11) **$59.00**	(12) **$59.00**	(13) **$59.00**	(14) **$59.00**	(15) **$59.00**
(16) **$59.00**	(17) **$59.00**	(18) **$59.00**	(19) **$59.00**	(20) **$59.00**
(21) **$61.95**	(22) **$64.90**	(23) **$67.85**	(24) **$70.80**	(25) **$73.75**
(26) **$76.70**	(27) **$79.65**	(28) **$82.60**	(29) **$85.55**	(30) **$88.50**

HOW TO COUNT WORDS: Name and address must be included in counting the number of Words in your ad. Each initial or number counts as 1 word: Mark Holly, 380 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017: 7 WORDS: Zip codes are not counted. Phone #: 2 Words. Symbols used as keys are charged for. City or State count as 1 word each.: Garden City, New York: 2 words. Abbreviations such as C.O.D., F.O.B., P.O., U.S.A, 7x10, 35mm count as 1 word. (P.O. Box 145 count as 3 words) Webster's International Unabridged Dictionary will be used as our authority for spelling, compound words, hyphens, abreviations, etc. **Please make checks payable to ELLERY QUEEN MAGAZINE.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLASSIFIED MARKET

EQ JUNE/85

ELLERY QUEEN — published 13 times a year. CLASSIFIED AD rate is $2.95 per word — payable in advance — ($44.25 minimum). Capitalized words 40¢ per word additional. To be

ADDITIONAL INCOME

"JANITORIAL Business Moneymaking Secrets." Free report! Make $25,000—$100,000+ annually. MBM, Box 1087A, Valley Center, CA 92082.

AVIATION

ANTIGRAVITY PROPULSION DEVICE! Free Brochure. RDA, Box 873, Concord, NC 28025.

BOOKS & PERIODICALS

FREE List of hardcover mysteries. Bimonthly catalogues list 8,000 titles each year. Dunn's Mysteries, 251 Baldwin Ave., Meriden, CT 06450.

FREE CATALOG. Used hardback mystery, crime and detective books. Steve Powell, Dept. DP, The Hideaway, Bar Harbor, ME 04609.

TEN Best Selling Books. GUARANTEED MONEYMAKERS. INCLUDES SECRETS of THE RICHEST PEOPLE. FREE INFORMATION. Write to: DARRELL BAKER, 336 Fern St., ANCHORAGE, AK 99504.

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK! Join our successful authors. Publicity, advertising, beautiful books. All subjects invited. Send for fact-filled booklet and free manuscript report. Carlton Press, Dept. SMR, 11 West 32 Street, New York 10001.

WORLD'S largest mystery specialist. $3 for next 4 catalogues. Aardvarks Book Detectives, P.O. Box 15070, Orlando, FL 32858-5070.

FLORIDA opportunities! Looking toward retirement, new job, your own business? Wall's Florida Newsletter presents valuable information on housing, employment, living costs, culture, life-style, much more. Three monthly issues only $11.95. Wall's, Dept. CC, Box 347, Mims, Florida 32754.

HARDBACK, paperback mysteries, $3 up. Send stamp. Detective-Mystery Booksearch, P.O. Box 15460, Orlando, FL 32858-5460.

BOOKS & PERIODICALS—Cont'd

READ "How to Write a Classified Ad That Pulls." Instructive booklet tells how to write an effective classified ad. Also includes certificates worth $2.00 toward a classified ad in any of our publications. For your copy send $2.25 (includes postage) to I. M. Bozoki, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$1,000 Weekly Home Business Directory. Free Details. Name and address to: Box 1610-EQ, Darien, Connecticut, 06820-1610.

STAY HOME! MAKE MONEY ADDRESSING ENVELOPES. VALUABLE GENUINE OFFER. 20¢. Write Lindco, 3636-DA Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60559.

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THE ZIP CODE: please use it when ordering merchandise from classified advertisements. You'll receive faster delivery.

THE ARABS HAVE MILLIONS TO LOAN, INVEST, PURCHASE! FREE DETAILS! PRS-DC, 935 Main, Vidor, TX 77662.

BUY IT WHOLESALE

400,000 BARGAINS Below Wholesale! Many Free! Liquidations...Closeouts...Job Lots...Single Samples. Free Details: Worldwide Bargainhunters, Box 730-IO, Holland, MI 49423.

SAVE 50% on Diamond Jewelry and Gems! Satisfaction Guaranteed. Free brochure. Write: Omega Gems, 1575 Bayshore #151-E, San Francisco, Cal. 94124.

FIREWORKS—Free Catalog, Hundreds of Items. Kellner Fireworks, P.O. Box 67, Oil City, PA 16301.

MUSICAL Greeting cards. $13/Dz. + $2.00 Postage., Orient, 111-35 75th Avenue, Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375. (718) 544-0598.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PLACE CLASSIFIED

included in the next issue please send order and remittance to I. M. Bozoki, Classified Ad Manager, DAVIS PUBLICATIONS, INC., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

EDUCATION & INSTRUCTION

UNIVERSITY DEGREES BY MAIL. Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D's . . . without attending classes! Inexpensive, fast. Free revealing details. Counseling, Box 389-EQ-6, Tustin, California 92680.

UNIVERSITY DEGREES! Economical home study for Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate. Prestigious faculty counsels for independent study and life experience credits. Free information—Richard Crews, M.D. (Harvard), President, Columbia Pacific University, 1415 Third St., Dept. 2M16, San Rafael, CA 94901; Toll Free: 800/227-1617, Ext. 480; California: 800/772-3545, Ext. 480.

READ "How to Write A Classified Ad That Pulls." Instructive booklet tells how. Also includes certificate worth $2.00 toward a classified ad in any of our publications. For your copy send $2.25 (include postage) to I.M. Bozoki, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

FOR INVENTORS

INVENTIONS wanted! Patents financed! PATENTVESTMENTS INTERNATIONAL, 1050 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

GIFTS THAT PLEASE

IRRESISTIBLE opportunity! EXOTIC giftware for resale and personal use. Details $3.00 (includes $7.00 sample). Thompsons, Box 296A, Muskwonago, Wisconsin 53149.

A gift sure to please—ISAAC ASIMOV's SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, published monthly. Send $19.50 for 13 issues (includes shipping & postage) to Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, P.O. Box 1933, Marion, OH 43305.

GOVERNMENT SURPLUS

"GOVERNMENT SURPLUS" JEEPS $30.00! 5,000,000 Items! Complete information. Your area. 1985 OFFICIAL DIRECTORY. $3.00 (Guaranteed). SURPLUS (A872), 4620 Wisconsin Northwest, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016.

GOVERNMENT SURPLUS—Cont'd

IS It True you can buy Jeeps for $44. through the U.S. Government? Get the facts today! Call (312) 742-1142 Ext 7172.

HYPNOTISM

FREE Catalog. Hypnotism, Hypnotic cassettes, sleep learning. Become the person you truly want to be. DLMH, Box 487, Anaheim, CA 92805.

LOANS BY MAIL

BORROW $25,000 "OVERNIGHT". Any purpose. Keep indefinitely! Free Report! Success Research, Box 19739-SS, Indianapolis, IN 46219.

FAST-Action Loans by mail! Any Amount! Any Purpose! Fast-Easy-Confidential! Free Details! Creditmasters, Box 507-ELQ, Floral Park, New York 11002.

MAILING LISTS

COMPUTERIZED. All categories zipcoded Peel stick labels. 500/$18, 1M/$30, 5M/$125. O'Connors, 3461 Loganview, Baltimore, MD 21222.

MAILING LISTS current, responsive names of actual mailorder buyers. All categories. Guaranteed deliverable. For brochure, send SASE to: Alan Pelzner, 96 Laurel St., San Carlos, CA 94070.

MEMORY IMPROVEMENT

INSTANT MEMORY . . . NEW WAY TO REMEMBER. No memorization. Release your PHOTOGRAPHIC memory. Stop forgetting! FREE information. Institute of Advanced Thinking, 845DP ViaLapaz, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

MISCELLANEOUS

OLDTIME radio programs. Suspense drama, science fiction, comedies. Highly enjoyable tapes. Free catalogue. Carl D. Froelich, Route One, New Freedom, Pennsylvania 17349.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified Continued

MISCELLANEOUS—Cont'd

VOODOO Doll. The Real Thing $10: Carol, P.O. Box 55-8628, Miami, FL 33255-8628.

MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

$60.00 per Hundred securing-stuffing envelopes from home. Offer-details: Rush stamped self-addressed envelope. Imperial, P-460, X17410, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318.

FREE dealership!! Receive $25.00 orders keep $15.00! Hottest pulling circular around! For complete FREE dealership send long stamped self-addressed envelope: Worldwide #18, Box 15940, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318.

GOOD MONEY! Weekly! Processing mail! Free Supplies, Postage! No Selling! Information? Rush stamped envelope! Foodmaster-DCM, Burnt Hills, NY 12027.

"HUNDRED$ WEEKLY!" GUARANTEED PROCESSING $TAMPED ENVELOPES! $TART IMMEDIATELY! FREE DETAILS! WRITE: MJG-DPG, AMBLER, PA 19002.

READ "How to Write a Classified Ad That Pulls." Instructive booklet tells how to write an effective classified ad. Also includes certificates worth $2.00 toward a classified ad in any of our publications. For your copy send $2.25 (includes postage) to I. M. Bozoki, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

CAN you stuff 1000 envelopes for $500.00 weekly? Send six 22¢ stamps. Blume, Box 460159, Garland, Texas 75046

$1000 WEEKLY POSSIBLE! Mailing Envelopes! Easy Guaranteed Income! Free Details: SUNRISE, Box 415-D, Lewiston, NY 14092.

GET Rich! Free details. Send large stamped addressed envelope. Toddco, Dept. 3, 4219 West Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91505.

MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES—Cont'd

YOU! Can have Visa, MasterCard, No credit, bad credit, Divorce, Bankruptcy, 40-50% approved. Free details. Sunbelt Financial Planning, Box 45212, Dept. 1-112, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70895.

START a profitable home business. Send for free details. Larry Radford, 735 West 200 South, Payson, Utah 84651.

OF INTEREST TO ALL

HARNESS Witchcraft's powers. We teach you how. Gavin and Yvonne, Box 1502 AN, New Bern, N.C. 28560.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Banners. Giant six foot personalized banner. Example: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY MICHAEL". Send $3.95: Howell Banner Company, 7652 Quimby Avenue, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

FREE PRIVACY CATALOG. Cash income opportunities. Secret loans. Asset protection. New identity. Eden, Box 8410-AD, Fountain Valley, CA 92728

PERSONAL

SINGLE? Meet that special person—anywhere! Lowest fee. DATELINE, 316 Fifth Ave., New York 10001. (202) 328-1300, (513) 821-4600, (612) 888-1240.

MAKE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD PAY. Get "How to Write A Classified Ad That Pulls." Includes certificate worth $2.00 towards a classified ad. Send $2.25 (includes postage) to I. M. Bozoki, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

SINGLE? Widowed? Divorced? Nationwide introductions! Refined, sincere people! 18-80, Identity, Box 315-DT, Royal Oak, Michigan 48068.

YOU'LL MAKE MONEY

SAVE MONEY TOO— BY READING and ANSWERING THESE CLASSIFIED ADS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified Continued

PERSONAL—Cont'd

SOPHISTICATED SCANDINAVIANS, all ages, seek enlightened correspondence; sincere friendships. Details: (please enclose stamp) Scannaclub-CO3, Box 4, Pittsford, NY 14534.

UNIVERSITY DEGREES BY MAIL. Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D.'s . . . without attending classes! Inexpensive, fast. Free revealing details. Counseling, Box 389-DP6, Tustin, California 92680.

BEAUTIFUL GIRLS SEEK FRIENDSHIP AND MARRIAGE. American—Mexican—Philippine—European. Photo selection FREE! Latins, Box 1716-DD, Chula Vista, CA 92012.

UNIVERSITY DEGREES! Economical home study for Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate. Prestigious faculty counsels for independent study and life experience credits. Free information—Richard Crews, M.D. (Harvard), President, Columbia Pacific University, 1415 Third St., Dept. 2M13, San Rafael, CA 94901; Toll free: 800/227-1617, Ext. 480; California: 800/772-3545, Ext. 480.

PLEASE Be sure to include your zip code when ordering merchandise from classified advertisements. You'll receive faster delivery.

RECIPES

TEN Delicious, easy to make Chinese Dinner recipes. Send $4.00 and SASE to: Tze Leung Yung, Box 6131, Federal Way, WA 98063.

RECORDS, TAPES & SOUND EQUIPMENT

FREE Promotional albums, concert tickets, stereos, etc. Information: Barry Publications, 477 82nd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209.

SONGWRITERS

POEMS WANTED. Songs recorded and published. Radio-TV promotions. Broadway Music Productions, Box 7438-DA, Sarasota, FL 33578.

SPIRITUAL, religious poems wanted for musical setting recording. $1,000.00 for best song. Chapel Recording (S8), Box 112, Wollaston, MA 02170 (Talent Co.)

TAPES & CASSETTES

CBS MYSTERY THEATRES—Over 700 shows on reels or cassettes. Best quality, fastest service. Catalog $1.00:, P.O. Box 3509, Lakeland, FL 33802.

AGATHA Christie's Partners in Crime. Ten 1 hour color mysteries on video-cassette $24.95 each. Call Toll free 800-538-5856 in California 408-624-4704. Ask for free brochure.

UNUSUAL BOOKS

THE INTELLIGENCE LIBRARY: Many unique books & official manuals on RESTRICTED subjects—Bugging, Wiretapping, Locksmithing, Covert Investigation, & MUCH MORE. Free brochures, MENTOR, DP, 135-53 No. Blvd., Flushing, N.Y. 11354.

PLACE YOUR AD IN ONE OF OUR FICTION COMBINATIONS:
Mystery, Sci-Fi, or Special

OR TRY ONE OF OUR OTHER COMBINATIONS:
Combo #1, Combo #2, or Combo #3.

Each combination offers you a Special Discount Rate.
For further information write to I. M. Bozoki, Classified Ad Manager, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INDEX TO VOLUME EIGHTY-FIVE—JAN.-JUNE 1985

ALCOTT, SUSAN: The Metamorphosis of Nathaniel Kronstadt	February	62
AMMER, DONALD: Messy Christmas	January	161
ASIMOV, ISAAC: The Fourth Homonym	March	93
Upside Down	June	32
BANKIER, WILLIAM: A Bucket of Ice-Cold Life	January	129
Cutting It Close	February	140
Baytown's Loss	March	38
Dead Like Dogs	April	92
Doctor Workman	May	80
Murder in the Cards	June	134
BARNARD, ROBERT: What's in a Name?	June	112
BAXT, GEORGE: Handig	June	74
BENSEN, D. R.: Thought for Food	May	161
BOILEAU, PIERRE AND THOMAS NARCEJAC: Toto	February	102
BRAUND, MARY: Mary Sanderson's House	April	20
CARLSON, JOHN: Business Partners	March	59
CLARK, MARY HIGGINS: Stowaway	January	90
CLARKE, ANNA: Mr. Mundon's Memoirs	May	132
CLEMEAU, CAROL: Dead Wood	April	77
DAVIS, DOROTHY SALISBURY: The Last Party	February	128
DONNER, JAMES: Mystery Writer's Lament	June	83
DUDDY, THOMAS C.: Elementary	March	92
DURSTON, P.E.H.: Everybody's Gonna Be Real Nice	May	110
EQMM AUTHOR PHOTO QUIZ, Part 2	January	48
FRASER, ANTONIA: Swimming Will Be the Death of You	February	20
FREMLIN, CELIA: Bluebeard's Key	January	117
GILBERT, DON: A Will of Her Own	February	44
GLEITER, JAN: Fit Punishment	April	50
GOULART, RON: It's So Cold in China	February	114
Barbecue Bob	May	16
GRENIER, MARK: Advantage Taken	January	88
All Washed Up	April	91
Brush with Death	May	2
Carried Away	February	72
For Openers	June	37
Looking High—and Lo!	April	161
Rash Decision	April	161
Start of the Seizin'	April	161
HARSH, NOLEN: The Imperfect Wife	February	127
HART, CHARLES C.: Come Clean	April	153
HENSLEY, JOE L.: The Decision	February	106
HILL, REGINALD: The Worst Crime Known to Man	April	70
HOCH, EDWARD D. and JOSH PACHTER: The Spy and the Suicide Club	January	4

(continued on page 157)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INDEX TO VOLUME EIGHTY-FIVE—JAN.-JUNE 1985

(continued from page 156)

HOCH, EDWARD D.: Leopold in New York	February	4
The Theft of the Ball of Twine	March	18
The Trail of the Bells	April	4
The Problem of the Fatal Fireworks	May	140
The Crime of the Century	June	53
HOLDEN, M. EDWARD: Hateful Husband	February	161
Success Story	February	161
HOLDING, JAMES: More Grave Tones	March	161
HOWARD, CLARK: In Out of the Cold	January	18
Animals	June	4
HUBIN, ALLEN J.: The Jury Box	January-June	
HUGHES, RILEY: The Doctor Is Willing	May	161
JOHNSON, RYERSON: The Chalk line	March	106
JONES, SUZANNE: Viper	January	65
The Green Clock	January	72
The Comeback	January	82
KEARIN, JANET E.: This Little Piggy	March	92
KEATING, H.R.F.: Mrs. Craggs Hears the Nightingale	February	91
KNOWLES, BARBARA W.: Sister Faith	April	56
LANE, R.E.: What Happened	June	62
LORDON, RANDYE: The Settlement	June	66
MATTHEWS, PATRICIA: Mrs. Horner's Revenge	April	69
McATEER, JOAN: She Knows	April	52
Tell Me My Mind, Sally Ann	June	71
McCLINTICK, MALCOLM: The Invisible Man	May	73
McGERR, PATRICIA: Double Identity	March	134
MacDONALD, DORI: Oatmeal	May	38
MAYBERRY, FLORENCE V.: Widow?	June	90
MILLS, ROBERT P.: The Mystery of the Missing Gold	January	105
Villainy in the Village	June	106
NARCEJAC, THOMAS and PIERRE BOILEAU: Toto	February	102
NATSUKI, SHIZUKO: The Stairs	June	22
NORTHE, JAMES NEILL: Murder, Updated	May	57
OWENS, BARBARA: Noplace Else to Go	March	72
PACHTER, JOSH and EDWARD D. HOCH: The Spy and the Suicide Club	January	4
PENTECOST, HUGH: Accessory After the Facts	May	95
PORTER, R.E.: Crime Beat	January-March	
POUVOIR, J.L.: The Poisoned Polonais	May	46
POWELL, JAMES: The Verbatim Reply	March	122
The Dawn of Captain Sunset	April	34
The Brass Man	June	38
RANDALL, B. NICHOLS: A Peachy Lady	May	161

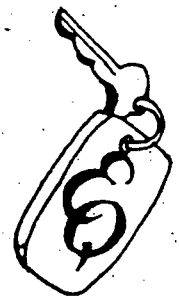
(continued on page 158)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INDEX TO VOLUME EIGHTY-FIVE—JAN.-JUNE 1985

(continued from page 157)

REA, RUTH: Joy Riding	June	73
RED, ELK, PATRICIA A.: Penitence	February	90
RENDELL, RUTH: Fen Hall	March	2
The Orchard Walls	May	4
SAMOYEDNY, STEVE: Bedtime Story	June	88
SCANLAN, MAE Z.: A Most Ignoble Crime (I Swear)	June	84
SCOTT, JEFFRY: The Adventure of the Rubber Bands	March	50
SHERMAN, STEVE: The Stone Wall	March	117
SIMENON, GEORGES: Inspector Maigret Investigates	May	28
STEINBRUNNER, CHRIS: Bloody Visions	January-February	
STUART, IAN: Lorna's People	May	61
SUMNER, SUSAN: Supplying Demand	April	129
SUTER, JOHN F.: And They Hauled It Away to the Mill	February	73
THILENIUS, HELEN: The No-Per-Cent Solution	March	92
TWOHY, ROBERT: Girl in a Dumpster	February	30
Yellow One-Eyed Cat	May	120
Narc in Love	June	121
VAN de WETERING, JANWILLEM: There Goes Ravelaar	January	34
Houseful of Mussels	April	134
WEIL, BARBARA JOYCE: Good Help Is Hard to Find	February	101
WEINSTEIN, LOUIS: Think Like a Schemer	April	110
WELLEN, EDWARD: Nothing of the Kind	May	92
WELTY, EUDORA: Old Mr. Marblehall	February	30
WHITE, PHYLLIS: Gothic Schmothic	June	60
WHITFIELD, RAOUL: The Pin	April	130
WILLOTT, SUSAN F.: I Can't Come to the Phone Right Now	January	161



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEXT ISSUE...

11 *NEW* stories—including

JEAN POTTS (about the effects of violence)

PETER LOVESEY (about Private Gorman's luck)

JANWILLEM van de WETERING (about Grijpstra and de Gier)

RUTH RENDELL (about the whistler)

EDWARD D. HOCH (about Michael Vlado)

WILLIAM BANKIER (about a joke that died)

ELEANOR SULLIVAN ..... *Editor*
AMY STOUT ..... *Editorial Assistant*
RALPH RUBINO ..... *Corporate Art Director*
GERARD HAWKINS ..... *Associate Art Director*
MARIANNE WELDON ..... *Associate Designer*
CARL BARTEE ..... *Director of Manufacturing*
CAROLE DIXON ..... *Production Manager*
LAUREN C. COUNCIL ..... *Production Assistant*
MICHAEL DILLON ..... *Circulation Director, Retail Marketing*
PRISCILLA GARSTON ..... *Circulation Director, Subscriptions*
JAY BRESNEHAN *Circulation Planning Director*
CYNTHIA MANSON *Subsidiary Rights Director*
BARBARA BAZYN .... *Permissions & Contracts Manager*
IRENE BOZOKI ..... *Classified Advertising Manager*
JAMIE FILLON ..... *Advertising Manager*

JOEL DAVIS
President & Publisher

LEONARD F. PINTO
Vice President & General Manager

FRED EDINGER
Vice President Finance

PAULA COLLINS
Vice President Circulation

WILLIAM F. BATTISTA
Associate Publisher

ELLERY QUEEN
Editor-in-Chief (1941–1982)

Advertising Sales Offices

NEW YORK 212-557-9100 — **CHICAGO** 312-346-0712 — **LOS ANGELES** 213-785-3114

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. Vol. 86, No. 6, Whole No. 506. June 1985. Published 13 times a year, every 28 days, by Davis Publications, Inc., at $1.75 a copy. Annual subscription $19.50 in U.S.A. and possessions; $23.00 elsewhere, payable in advance and in U.S. funds. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for change of address. Editorial and Executive Offices, 380 Lexington Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10017. Subscription orders and mail regarding subscriptions should be sent to P.O. Box 1930, Marion, Ohio 43305. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Canadian third-class postage paid at Windsor, Ontario.

© 1985 Davis Publications, Inc., all rights reserved. Protection secured under the Universal Copyright Convention and the Pan American Copyright Convention. ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE® is the registered trademark of Ellery Queen. Printed in U.S.A.

Submission must be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelope. The Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, P.O. Box 1930, Marion, Ohio 43305. In Canada return to 628 Monmouth Rd., Windsor, Ontario N8Y3L1. ISSN: 0013-6328

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Be the judge and jury for just $1

Get $145.95 worth of Best Selling Mysteries for $1

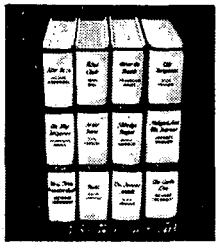
☑ **You get twelve full-length novels for $1.** ☑ **Select only the books you want.**
☑ **Save 60 to 80% off original publisher's prices.** ☑ **Pay no money in advance, eve**

JUDGE FOR YOURSELF. Our mystery books are the best spine-tinglers anywhere. To introduce you to these gripping tales of suspense and intrigue, we're making this remarkable offer...For only $1, The Detective Book Club will send you these twelve full length novels, each a masterpiece of mystery. Bought separately, these twelve novels would cost you $145.95. For this special trial offer, all twelve are yours, in four handsome, hardcover triple-volumes as shown, for only $1 plus shipping. An incredible value.

SAVE 60-80%. As a member you are GUARANTEED a savings of 60-80% off original publisher's prices. That's a savings of up to $15 for each triple-volume you choose to own. And most importantly, you will select from only the best of the more-than-400 mysteries published yearly. Authors like John D. MacDonald, Dick Francis and P.D. James. For any triple-volume you select, you pay just $8.95 plus shipping...that's only $2.98 for each easy-to-read, unabridged, full-length mystery.

There's No Mystery! There is no mystery to how our club works. Six times a year you will receive, free, the club's Previews describing upcoming selections. As a member, you may reject any volume before or after receiving it.

There is never a minimum number of books to buy, and you may return any unwanted selection within 21 days and owe nothing. And of course, you may cancel your membership at any time. As one of the oldest book clubs in America, we want you to be satisfied. Simply fill out the coupon and return it to: The Detective Book Club, Roslyn, NY 11576.



Please enroll me as a member and send me my four triple-volumes shown here, containing twelve mysteries. I enclose no money now. I'll examine them for one week, then will either accept them for $1 plus shipping, or return them and owe nothing.

As a member, I will receive, free, the club's monthly Preview which describes my next selections. I will always have at least 10 days to reject any volume by returning the form provided. I may return any book within 21 days and owe nothing. For each volume I keep, I'll send you $8.95 plus shipping. I may cancel my membership at any time. Satisfaction Guaranteed.

5-JU
D24M1S

THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB, Roslyn, NY 11576

Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PUBLISHED BY
WALTER J. BLACK, INC.
ESTABLISHED 1923

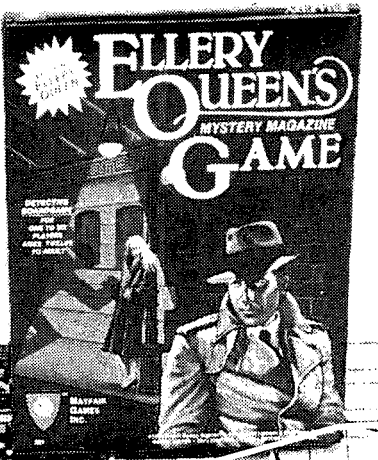
Note: Members accepted in USA and Canada only. Offer slightly different in Canada.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MURDER? THEFT? BLACKMAIL? EMBEZZLEMENT?

WHO? WHY? WHERE? HOW?

You solve the mysteries in . . .



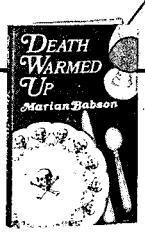
Mayfair Games
P.O. Box 5987
Chicago, IL.
60680

™

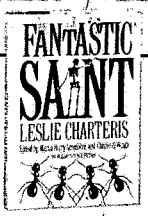
Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine ® is the registered trademark of Ellery Queen. Ellery Queen character Copyright © 1985 Ellery Queen. All Rights Reserved.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You're invited to the trial.



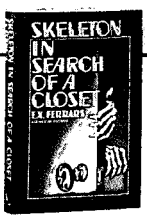
DEATH WARMED UP, by Marian Babson.
A mouth-watering mystery morsel.
Pub. List $11.95



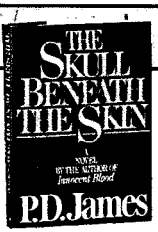
THE FANTASTIC SAINT, by Leslie Charteris.
Six of the best Simon Templar short stories.
Pub. List $11.95

UNTIL DEATH DO US PART, by Mary McMullen.
High-powered business woman stops at nothing!
Pub. List $11.95

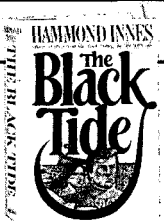
VANISHING POINT, by Victor Canning.
International intrigue, blackmail and suspense.
Pub. List $10.95



SKELETON IN SEARCH OF A CLOSET, by E.X. Ferrars.
Family reunion turns deadly.
Pub. List $11.95

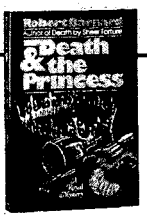


THE SKULL BENEATH THE SKIN, by P.D. James.
Death notes are sent to the cast before and after a murder.
Pub. List $13.95



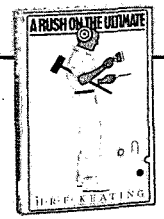
THE BLACK TIDE, by Hammond Innes.
High seas tale of deadly vengeance.
Pub. List $16.95

WHY ME, by Donald E. Westlake.
Casual gem theft leads to havoc.
Pub. List $13.50



DEATH & THE PRINCESS, by Robert Barnard.
A night with the princess leads to death.
Pub. List $10.95

MAIGRET AND THE NAHOUR CASE, by Georges Simenon.
Death of a professional gambler investigated.
Pub. List $10.95



A RUSH ON THE ULTIMATE, by H.R.F. Keating.
Which house guest is the killer?
Pub. List $10.95

TARGET FOR TRAGEDY, by Judson Philips.
Peter Styles unravels deadly conspiracy.
Pub. List $9.95

RECEIVE 12 MYSTERIES FOR JUST $1.

For details see last page.

THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED